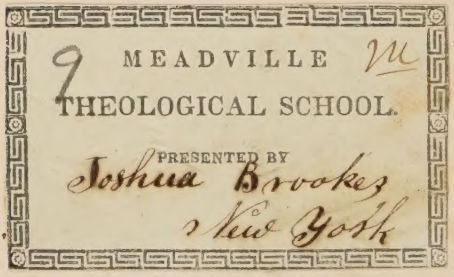
Class No. PN 49 Book No. B18

LIBRARY OF THE

Meadville Theological School

Presented by Joshua Brookes

Accession No. 15361



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/christianitylite0000tbba

53612

CHRISTIANITY

Brookes

AND

LITERATURE:

IN A

SERIES OF DISCOURSES.

BY

T. B. BALCH,

PASTOR OF A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SNOW-HILL, MD.

MEADVILLE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

PHILADELPHIA:

E. LITTELL, 88 CHESTNUT STREET.

Clark & Raser, Printers, 33 Carter's Alley.

1826.

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

Gerstel

Universitäts-Bibliothek Heidelberg

CONTENTS.

DISCOURSE I.

The Temptations of Literature 1

"Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." *James* i. 13.

DISCOURSE II.

The Literature of the Scriptures 52

"Search the Scriptures."—*John* v. 39.

DISCOURSE III.

Obstacles to the Piety of Literary Men . . 88

"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." 1*st Corinthians*, chap. i. 22, 23, 24.

DISCOURSE IV.

Christianity Miscellaneously applied . . . 117

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ."—*Colossians*, ii. 8.

DISCOURSE V.

The Relation of Christianity to Polite Literature 138

"For all the Athenians and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing."—*Acts*, xvii. 21.

DISCOURSE VI.

The superior Value of Christianity to Literature 164

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—*Matt.* xiii. 45, 46.

DISCOURSE VII.

Humility an Ornament to Literary Men . . 189

"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein."—*Luke*, xviii. 17.

DISCOURSE VIII.

The Church a Field for Literary Men . . . 207

"For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."—*Matt.* vi. 32, 33.

Appendix 231

DISCOURSE I.

The Temptations of Literature.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."—*James* i. 13.

All men are liable to temptation, and the liability of all men to be overcome by it is a consequence of the fall. If the fall had never taken place, the innocence of mankind would have been established in Eden, by an irreversible decree on the part of God, our sovereign. It would have been every way suitable that our innocence should have been proclaimed and perpetuated on the spot, which had become signalized by so illustrious a moral achievement.

But temptation now disturbs the conscience and breaks down the fancied integrity of man in every condition of society. It visits the wigwam of the savage, inciting him to deeds of rapine; it binds the African in chains to the vices of his kraal; and in the polished metropolis, putting on gay attire, deludes infatuated thousands. It haunts the anchorite

as he keeps his midnight vigil in the cell of superstition; and is not far distant from the sylvan recesses of the academy, where the lover of wisdom dwells in solitude. It even takes its place by the heart of the Christian, when the consecrated hour of prayer draws near, ever ready to do its utmost to close the avenues of intercourse between man and his Maker.

But whilst temptation is thus busy with man in every condition of society, there is no pursuit in which men can engage entirely devoid of its snares. Some spend their lives in traffic, and all along their earthly pilgrimage, there exists a line of temptations that runs parallel with their being. Others spend their lives in political machinations, and politicians have often been the victims of its stratagems. So with all the circle of human pursuits. Under a deep conviction that men of literary habits are subject to peculiar temptations, and being further convinced that God would not give a system of religion that was not capable of an application to the pursuits of all men, we undertake these discourses. Should there be an entire failure in this attempt, it would grieve ME to have injured a cause that WE love to advance, but should it be crowned with any portion of success, let all the glory be given to Him to whom alone it is due.

We propose, 1st. To present a sketch of those temptations incident to literary pursuits.

2d. To consider the influence of Christianity in subduing these temptations.

Among the temptations which beset literary men, one of the strongest is the love of fame. This has often been descanted on, but rarely condemned, though its condemnation is recorded in the Scriptures. "How can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and love not the honour that cometh from God only." This passion for fame is not confined to men of literature. The barbarous chieftain performs most of his bloody deeds that he may be celebrated in the annals of his tribe. The youthful warrior cares not if he fall in the morning of an engagement, if his fame is to be the burden of the coming age. But in literature it is not absent: It rouses to exertion, giving keenness to study, ardour to pursuit, and stringing the mind with more than its accustomed vigour. It has been known to operate with undiminished influence, when declining health, the result of excessive study, has uncovered to its victim the realities of a premature grave. This was strikingly exemplified in that highly gifted youth, Henry Kirke White, on whose brief but brilliant stay in our world the mind delights to linger. But happy would it be for men of literature universally, if like him they were to overcome through the blood of the Lamb, by discovering a charm in the person and work of the Saviour, which overpowers the empty distinctions of life. Genius from all lands has gone on a pilgrimage to his tomb,

but he sees it not. Genius has loudly praised him, but he hears it not. Praise to him now, is what the sound of music would be among the cemeteries, where the mighty dead repose in unbroken slumbers.

The love of fame among literary men is distinguished by this peculiarity. It terminates for the most part, on that award which is given to the productions of the mind. Those fields of glory in which personal prowess is demanded, are cheerfully relinquished to men of another stamp. But the object at which the mere literary man aspires, is to please by the interior furniture of his mind, to awaken admiration at the sound of his name, and fix the intense look of posterity on the creations of his genius, or upon his discoveries in the regions of abstract science.

It is in vain to deny that the human mind is capable of all we have mentioned. So long as the art of printing shall endure, so long will mankind call on the press for the choice productions of taste. It is equally vain to deny that in all this there is something fascinating, and that the desire of fame properly controlled, may be wrought into extensive usefulness, for the benefit of our race. Notwithstanding all the disappointment which has blighted the hopes of literary men, literature has still her martyrs: men who have struggled with adversity, and endured the accumulated evils of poverty, that they might gain the dearest object of their hearts.

The desire of fame has cheered their drooping spirits, as a robe of light on the distant line of impending clouds often cheers the wearied traveller.

Closely connected with this temptation, is another which deserves a weighty consideration. Literary men are easily affected by disappointment, from the failure of any enterprise in which they engage. The present age may not do justice to their merits. They may be outstripped by successful rivals, in the race of popularity. The attention of mankind may be taken up by threatened revolutions in government, or by the siege of hostile armies, or party spirit may have an influence in blinding the judgment of an otherwise discerning public. These causes have operated, and may continue to operate, in keeping out of sight for a season the most finished works of the mind. It is so in other things. We can easily conceive how the general who has crowded the destinies of his country into the events of a solitary battle, notwithstanding the display of his wonted courage, may be sent away into banishment; or the man who has hazarded his all upon some alluring speculation, may come down to the enclosures of a cottage. The artist may resign the pencil which the judgment of his peers pronounces to be unequal to the delineation of some august event, or the king may relinquish the sceptre which he wants energy to wield.

The disappointments of life have been a fruitful theme of declamation in all ages. Not only have

men, who have never enjoyed distinction, spoken of its emptiness, but they who have been possessed of the highest portion of fame, which it is in the power of earth to bestow. An air of pensiveness frequently pervades the writings of those whose spirits are the most buoyant with hope. Disappointment lurks in the still retreats of literature, as well as in the open and noisy field of warlike achievement, or commercial enterprise. To reduce the rebellious murmurs of our race under the evils of life, moralists have been lavish of their speculations, and philosophy has not been sparing of its maxims. But the speculations of the one, and the maxims of the other, have been alike inadequate to the task. Christianity alone can extinguish the odious ambition of the heart.

Let none complain of disappointment after what happened to Milton. Milton, a name on which we love to dwell, because the scriptures furnished the outline of his immortal work. Seizing on the brief historical record of human innocence, he has held up to view a picture, upon which mankind may look and be convinced, of what they have lost, and will ever lose, by transgression. Long did he ponder, and late he chose his theme. Year after year did he hover round Eden, keeping there his nightly watch. He was there when morning shed its light, or when the evening star was coming up, as a rejoicing pioneer, to station round it the circling planets.

He brought thence a map of Eden, in which we distinctly trace its noble rivers, its fountains treasured in cisterns of gold, its bowers of thickest foliage, where dwelt the collected innocence of a world. But he brought also tidings of the breaking up of the covenant, of the description of ties which linked the destinies of our world with the destiny of the eternal throne, of the taking off the robe of innocence from man, of his guilty retreat from intercourse with his Maker, of his banishment and his condemnation.

After the completion of such a work, what might not Milton have expected. To say the least, he should have been rewarded, by the approbation of men, so deeply interested in the details of his poem. But Milton never appears so engaging, as when his biographer represents him calm and collected, not at all shaken in mind or disconcerted in purpose. He instantly erects a tribunal among distant generations, before which the merits of his work were to be tried. It is delightful, indeed, to think that with all this there might have been blended a profound trust in God, a reliance on his promises, and a faith, that whatever is undertaken to the glory of his name, shall not eventually be lost. If so, we hold up Milton to the imitation of many who lose their courage upon every slight disappointment, in whom a propensity to the lowest vices is thereby engendered, and who distrust the

providence, and eventually become sceptical about the existence of their Maker.

A third temptation to which our attention should be turned, is the pride of understanding. Condescension to ignorance is a painful duty to corrupt human nature, and therefore a duty rarely fulfilled. When a man of taste meets with a person of kindred propensities, hours may be delightfully spent; but let intelligence meet with ignorance, and they will harmonize with difficulty. But possessed of the principles which animated the apostle Paul, the duty is comparatively easy. Such condescension was pre-eminently displayed by our Saviour. How meek does he appear in his interview with the woman of Samaria, in all the abodes of poverty, and the haunts of ignorance. If God who is infinitely wise were to cast us off from his presence, because of our ignorance, or were to bar all access to his throne, save to the wise, then would all the human family without exception, perish in their folly.

We are aware that literature polishes the mind, softens the asperities of character, and sometimes inspires a diffidence, painful to its possessor. Yet this is very remote from the humility enjoined by the New Testament. But some literary men are not possessed of common diffidence. They are distinguished by an indefinable recklessness of thought, that sets at defiance the established opinions of society. We could point to living poets who will utter startling sentiments for the sake of metrical

proportion,—who write on the green grave that death is an eternal sleep, and strive to pillage the tomb of the light that streams upon it, from the promise of the resurrection morning.

How lamentable is it, that some of our modern historians should have been so infected with this pride of understanding. Not content to advocate the cause of infidelity in the walks of philosophy and ethics, they have carried their hostility to religion, even into the details of naked facts. But such a procedure is not at all warranted by philosophy. Religion cannot be answerable for the craft of her pretended priests, or for the blood that has been shed by aspiring politicians. She asks to be tried by her own records, and *there* acquitted or condemned.

Let us now bring into contrast with these champions of infidelity, an advocate of Christianity, and one of its meek and holy disciples, and it will be like putting together in the same painting, the lofty though naked oak, with the green though lowly shrubbery at his foot. We select Watts. He was not afraid to combat the most formidable enemies of Christianity, and yet he could condescend to the intellect of a child. His merits were so obvious, that the violent prejudices of his most celebrated biographer, gave way to an almost subdued antipathy.

It is a pleasing view of Providence, to see how men are reared up for special purposes. Watts was

as well qualified for the work he undertook, as Luther for the work of the Reformation. He knew in the shades of Stoke Newington what would suit the wants of Christians, and where can the Christian be found, who has not received comfort from the pious effusions of his pen. His hymns have been sung in the desert and on the deep, in the imperial metropolis and the secluded hamlet, among tribes of barbarians and groups of scholars, in the village school and academic groves, in eastern climes and western forests. But what particularly affects me, is the thought that such frequent use is made of these Psalms by the dying. When death is opening the gates of heaven to the pious, their dying testimony is often taken from this devout manual.

It was a singular honour to compose hymns for such a multitude. He who dictates the war songs of a tribe, is held in honour. He who tunes his harp to recount the deeds of a clannish chieftain, is looked upon with reverence. He who goes before a victorious army, sounding aloud the lofty triumphal ode, is not lightly esteemed. But Watts has long led

The sacramental host of God's elect.

We envy not Homer his sublimity, or Virgil his beauty, or Milton his invention, but we almost envy Watts the laurels he has reaped in the vineyard of Jesus. He has decorated the temple of Zion, and carried thence a wreath of glory that fadeth not away.

A fourth temptation is a familiarity with external nature, without a recognition of its Author. This may be exemplified in the researches of philosophy, in the discoveries of travellers, and in that graphic power which the imagination of the genuine poet must always possess. Philosophers become engrossed with the wonders of nature. When on the track of discovery, they pant after discoveries still larger. Had Newton been an infidel, his infidelity might not have been a barrier to his researches, because infidelity does not strip men of the power of intelligence; it only makes them accountable for an understanding perverted and abused. He might still have disclosed fresh wonders in nature, and after taking the admeasurement of the heavenly orbs, he might have lain down in his tomb, a tomb enlightened indeed by splendid planets, suns and systems, but not gilded at the same time by a solitary ray from the star that guided eastern sages to their God. We may admire Jehovah in the works around us, and not love him as revealed in his word. We may stand astonished at the productions of the architect which have stood the shock of time, whilst the name and attributes of the architect are entirely lost amidst the lapse of ages. We may be awed at the power, and not attracted by the compassion of our Maker. We may know the extent of his sceptre, and not be transformed by it into new obedience. We may search the temple of Nature, and not be able to say—Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever.

It is with no small degree of pleasure we observe that some scientific travellers have done much to aid the cause of Christianity. They have wrought into captivating description the scenery that has fallen beneath their eye on distant continents. They have searched countries renowned in the Scriptures, cities that once glittered in eastern splendour, spots consecrated by miracles, and hallowed by the footsteps of holy prophets, and inspired seers. In all their researches, they have awarded a just tribute to the fidelity of the Scriptures.

They have illustrated prophecies, the illustration of which, but for their researches, might have been concealed at this hour. But after this tribute so justly earned, truth demands of us the declaration, that the far greater part of our scientific travellers are impelled by different motives. Ample opportunity is given them of enlarging their views of the divine immensity, and of communing with God in his exterior works, but they embrace it not. They climb Alpine mountains, but leave no memorial of God on their summits. They pierce the boundless wilderness, and yet the voice of prayer and adoration never breaks its solitudes; or standing, girded round by an assemblage of beauties, they see not the arm by which they were unrolled.

But we have said that this temptation may be illustrated by the pictures which poetry is so constantly presenting of natural scenery. It is the province of the poet above all men to deal in de-

scription, and hence mankind have always been accustomed to associate with him, in the mind, the valley and the mountain, the hill and the dale, the grotto, the garden and the desert.

Formerly the poet used to task his powers to the utmost to set off the excellencies of heathen gods, but now under a light which displays the folly of the heathen mythology, he is content with that which is next to atheism. He depicts the distant line of hills, and the peak of some lofty mountain, the fresh fountains of the landscape, and the herbage of the valley, and then drops a song in praise of nature. But he asks not from whence these beauties have descended; and there falls not on the ear of the landscape, a whisper of that Great Being, who continually fills immensity by his presence. Who has ever painted the works of creation better than some impious poets. You may take them in their serene and thoughtful moods, say at the hour of evening, when this world is about to be shaded by the appearance of a thousand brighter orbs. They have extolled the nightly host, and have gone away from the glorious sight, not to commune with their Maker, but to the revelry of the festive board.

How striking is the contrast, when we look at the method in which the sacred writers descant on the works of creation. There is something astonishingly lofty in every flight they undertake, bold as the flight of an angel when rising up to explore

the works of Jehovah, but flung into overpowering amazement, he kneels again in a reverence deeper than before. They sweep the majestic outline, and within the circle we behold continents, oceans, mountains, islands, and deserts. Over the vast field of creation glowing with the light of Jehovah, they cast the shade of a thousand soft, intervening beauties. All nature is vocal with the praise of God, or his hand draws the curtain of night that encloses the earth in its ample folds and enwraps every living thing as it securely descends to its appointed bed of repose. They cull of all that is grand, and all that is lowly on earth, to proclaim the glory of our Maker.

A fifth temptation of literature may be found in the emulation it inspires. This is generally placed among the virtuous qualities of our nature, but we must hold it to be at war with holiness. It is dislodged by divine grace among other unhallowed things, which exalt themselves against all that is called God. It hides itself as more and more ashamed before the development of the pure and perfect image of Jesus on the heart. It is ranked by an inspired apostle among a host of evils, that bring along with them the wrath of God. But with many it is made the spring of all the doings that take place in literature. Without it, in the estimation of some, the cultivation of literature would entirely cease. From infancy to manhood, it is the watchword employed by parents to their children—

parents who take the scope of their views from the policy of this guilty world.

Emulation pervades academies, colleges, universities. It enters the forum, the senate house, and has far too much to do with the holy duties of the pulpit. The statesman may lead us to believe that patriotism is the leading spring of action, when he is only emulous of glory; the advocate pleads for weeping innocence, when panting to excel his antagonist in debate, and the preacher may apparently be overwhelmed with zeal for his flock, whilst emulation is deeply seated in his soul.

We are aware indeed that scholars may do justice to the merits of one another, and it is delightful to see them grouped together in holy fellowship, upon the elevation of a common literature. But it would not be difficult in tracing the history of the human mind, to point distinctly to periods that have been signalized by more than an ordinary share of rancour and jealousy among those devoted to liberal pursuits. There are pages that have come down to us, in which there is no recognition of that meekness which Christianity enjoins, and in which no canon of Christian criticism has found a place.

It may not be improper here to cast an allusion towards that literary contest which has been carried on for some time past between our own and a foreign country. We have been as anxious to emulate our parent country in arts as in arms, and

because England was slow in acknowledging our literary merits, and assumed dictatorial airs in deciding our scientific graduation, all the asperity of the bitterest passions has been awakened. Most cordially do we rejoice that the contest has been drawn to a triumphant close on the part of our country. The war of independence was not more decisively ended. But it has been terminated, not by rancorous hostility, but by sending over those productions which have not failed to carry along with them a resistless conviction that genius and imagination are not entirely extinguished in this western wilderness.

We may find another temptation in that deleterious inactivity, which may be the result of too profound a devotedness to literature. By inactivity we mean a certain sluggishness, the effect of excessive fondness for books, which disqualifies for social relations, for the active duties of life, and for duties peculiarly Christian. We ought here to enter a long list of honourable exceptions, in all the specified particulars. But these exceptions will readily occur to the reader. It is sometimes delightful to remark how eloquent senators and statesmen will pour forth their hearts in unfettered confidence to their children. It is quite refreshing to behold how men who are toiling successfully up the steep of fame, will retire awhile into its verdant glens, and present family scenes that melt and subdue the heart.

But still there is foundation for the remark, that even the tender social duties of life may be lightly regarded or entirely overlooked in the all absorbing influence of literary enterprise. Man has numberless duties, to the strict and faithful performance of which he is *obligated*. God has revealed an appointed day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained. Now in that embellishment which literature is so constantly casting over the wilderness we inhabit, men of literary taste may often lose from their minds the impression of those solemn realities to which Christianity is so incessantly pointing her disciples. There may be but an imperceptible increase of that unction by which we may know all things; and that purified conscience which ought to send us away to solitary devotion, quicker than the sound of the matin bell, may become cold and hesitating in its decisions, whilst the mind is ruminating on classic pictures, or antiquarian lore. We are perfectly aware how much we expose ourselves to reproach for the inculcation of these sentiments. For indulging in a similar train of sentiment, Literature perverted in the hands of the irreligious, has attempted to shed forth its baleful curse on the sequestered grave of Henry Martyn,—of him who relinquished the groves of science for the rugged toils of a missionary life, because he saw in the throne of his Maker, gems more durable and brilliant than the profound of science could supply,—of

him who gave out the record from on high to the crowded realms of Persia, and carried that exterminating warfare which Christianity will ever wage with Mohammedanism, into the very gates and citadel of the enemy.

In like manner Cowper saw that prayer was a duty—Cowper, a name becoming more and more endeared to the Christian. The sound of it awakens many tender associations, but infidelity seems deeply anxious to cast reproach on Christianity in considering the melancholy of the Olney poet. We are unable to throw any additional light on this point, after the very able replies which have been published to such aspersions. It is currently asserted, that his gloom was generated by religion, and that the circle of his pious friends and duties, helped on the delusion. This is the statement, but the statement is at variance with common sense.

It cannot be shown that religion has ever been the cause of gloom or melancholy to any man, though the absence of religion may be. An inability through the corruption of the heart to apprehend the comforts of religion, may be the source of despondency. But if we labour under inability to discover the beauties of the Newtonian philosophy, and a solitary mind of delicate texture becomes overpowered in its attempts to comprehend it, is the Newtonian philosophy therefore destitute of beauty. When Cowper enjoyed the comforts of religion, he was happy. To this lovely poet the

pilgrimage of life seems to have been as the travel of an Arabian desert, occasionally relieved by fountains, green spots, and a group of pilgrims. These were all supplied by religion. These fountains were the Scriptures—these spots were in the vineyard of Jesus—these pilgrims were his fellow Christians, who drew from the same fountains, and reposed in the same pastures, realizing the description of the Psalmist—"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me by still waters." To such society God led him in mercy, or he might have roamed the whole length of the desert, and dreamed of greenness, but it would have been as the herbage that surrounds the rock of the wilderness. At Olney his weary spirit was refreshed. There he sketched his map of a thoughtless world, and there he found society, as far before that of the gay, as the fellowship of Heaven confessedly transcends the fellowship of earth. Let it not then be forgotten, that in all the associations of the mind, in connexion with Olney, that the revered, though reviled, Newton, will bear a part. In the circle which environs Cowper, his venerable form will not be the least conspicuous. The temptation of Cowper was great, but God tempteth no man, as we may gather from a striking allegory.

I was a stricken deer, and left the herd
Long since. With many an arrow deep infixed
Into my panting side! when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades;
There was I found of one, who had himself

Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore,
And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
With gentle force eliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me live.

We live in an age distinguished by its activity. Among other things, the press is doing a great work for the advancement of Christianty. We indulge not the romantic belief that all the evils in the world are to be quickly expelled, and that from henceforth, there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy, in all the holy mountain. But enough is now doing to regenerate the world, to engage all in the work, who can contribute the least amount to its consummation. We believe there is no necessary incompatibility between literature and activity, in promoting the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Who have been the pioneers of salvation to the countries of the East? Who are deepening the broad foundations of Christianity in Hindostan, Burmah, Persia, Ceylon? They are scholars—but scholars whose literature is sanctified, whose passion for it is subordinated to the standard of the Scriptures, and whose genius is controlled by a supreme desire after usefulness.

This is but a contracted sketch of those temptations incident to literary pursuits. But it will be more important to suggest a corrective for that vitiated taste, which has been the object of mild animadversion. We were to inquire, in the second place, into the influence of Christianity, in reducing the force of these temptations—Of this, we propose

to take a general view, before we draw from the whole discussion several important inferences. Here we avow it distinctly as our belief, that one of the greatest difficulties in the world, is to make the gospel efficacious to men of profoundly literary habits. We do not say but that a large number of scholars have embraced the gospel in its purity and power. But they have had a more ceaseless conflict to maintain, in keeping their garments unspotted than any other order of men. If the following description is ever realized, it is realized in the daily employments of the Christian student.

> His warfare is within. There, unfatigued,
> His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,
> And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,
> And never with'ring wreaths, compared with which,
> The laurels that a Cæsar reaps, are weeds.

Yet God alone must be magnified, for Christ is exalted far above all rule and authority, over things in heaven, and things on earth. Moses was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt, that ancient store-house of arts and sciences. But he shines on the sacred page not as the courtier of science, but as the servant of the Most High. Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and versed in Hebrew learning. The ritual of the Jews, he holds up to our view, as a transparent mirror, in which we may see Jesus led away as a lamb to the slaughter. Yet Paul was a laborious self-denying apostle. But many scholars have embraced the gospel, because there is a power in the gospel. Boyle is not the only philo-

sopher. Pascal is not the only mathematician. Sir William Jones not the only orientalist. Cowper not the only poet; and as Christianity shall go on conquering, and to conquer, she will conquer thousands of distinguished scholars, by her influence. Other systems may be tried, but they will fail in breaking the dominion of these temptations. Christianity, applied to the heart, has never failed.

To supply a corrective for these temptations, it is necessary to ponder deeply the immensity of Jehovah. God tempteth no man, is the declaration of the text. He will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to dumb idols. He gives to the human mind all its powers, that the human mind may find its proper portion in his attributes. If men be tempted to idolatry, it is not God that tempts them, but the corruption of their own hearts. If we adore an idol, we practically affirm that God has no perfections comparable to the perfection we recognise in the object of our idolatry.

But in setting forth the superior claims of Jehovah to our love, over all the objects of life, where shall we begin? The theme is boundless. The most impassioned eloquence becomes cold, in pourtraying the majesty of God. With him are treasured up all the sources of eternal wisdom, a wisdom incapable of increase, and which the lapse of ages cannot diminish. He has set out myriads of objects on the fair frame of our world. Who can grow tired in beholding Creation in all its aspects?

alternately clothing itself in the garments of Spring, the robes of Summer, the brown habiliments of Autum, or the haggard dress of winter. He weaves the green mantle which the vernal season flings imperceptibly over the earth, he adjusts the striking points of the landscapes, he hangs the snowy cloud on the distant mountain. He set a compass on the deep, and casts into its innumerable caverns, gems of every hue and shape. By his guidance, the flocks wind homeward in the evening, beneath a finely setting sun, or leave the folds in the morning, and feed all day in his pastures. Point out sublimity or beauty, and Christianity will tell, with an authoritative voice, who made it. Yet men sing aloud of all nature, of fountains, woods, rivers, waterfalls, but get no nearer to God, the author of all. But if God operates continually in the natural world, he operates with equal power, in all the regions of mind. The judgment gets from him all its faculty of discrimination, the memory all its pleasing reviews. He keeps up continually all the secret and mysterious elaborations of thought. He quickens the imagination, that golden urn which his hand has set in among the powers of the mind, that the mind may not wear the aspect of haggard poverty. God is the author of the mind, therefore the mind, in all its researches, should be consecrated to his glory. He is declared to be the Father of lights, from whom cometh down, every good and perfect gift.

His providence over the mind is universal. It is needless here to consider Divine Providence, as it extends itself to all the subordinate departments of life, but in its application to the opportunities of storing the mind with useful knowledge. We see him unceasingly training the mind to the measure of strength which he designs to give it, opening sources of information, leading it to fountains of education, casting it into a mould, to receive the deep and lasting impressions of wisdom. Whose heart does not expand with generous emotion at the sight of a youth, led up from the shade of obscurity? Who can fail to admire that Providence which is disclosing to young men of piety and promise, means of education, but for which, they might have lived comparatively useless, and died neglected? Who can think of scholars rising into notice, without connecting their benefactors with the group? We are often delighted in literary biography, with the generous deeds done by benefactors; and in works of science and taste, how often may we find, upon close inspection, that Divine Providence has had a singular agency in their production.

The only efficacious corrective which can be furnished to subdue these unholy temptations, is, that men of literature, should take the highest possible standard in the religion of the Scriptures. It is a just subject of lamentation, that literary men, should establish for themselves, a standard inferior to that which is settled by revelation. They frequently

take the lowest, though they need the highest. We often see men of literature satisfied with a naked and heartless morality, instead of those abundant fruits of righteousness, which spring from a union, by faith, to Jesus Christ. They give a general assent to the truth of Christianity, though they withhold from it that faith, of which the heart is the seat. They look upon the exterior of Christianity, but enter not into her interior discoveries, and now and then, we are obliged to enrol the name of some distinguished scholar, on the list of those who have advocated as dangerous a heresy as ever perplexed the church, and troubled the peace of Zion.

A certain polish is given to the character by literature. Severe study itself may free us from many outward vices, to which other men, less favoured, may be addicted. A scholar, who is accustomed to walk from day to day in classic regions, holding converse with the well wrought fables of antiquity, and to contemplate mankind, as exhibited through the medium of the imagination, and to admire those noble traits which sometimes gleam in the records of Paganism, is reluctant to appropriate to himself, those humbling truths which are incessantly driven home upon the conscience, in the Scriptures. He may form incorrect views of the evil of sin, and its intrinsically odious nature, whilst a Pagan mythology is taking fast hold of his mind. Therefore, he may indignantly reject the solemn reasoning of Jesus. "Think you that they were sinners above all

men, whose blood Pilate mingled with the sacrifices, I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish:" and in proportion to the indistinctness of his views of sin, will be the indistinctness of his views, of that one oblation, by which all must be recovered, who shall be recovered. Yet, upon a few such humbling truths, applied to the heart by the Spirit, awakening the conscience to a sense of guilt, does God commence the erection on the soul, of a superstructure, infinitely more bright and beautiful, than any superstructure which genius ever reared. The foundation may be laid at some mysterious moment, when the spirit is beginning to look after its long forgotten Creator, and casts around a wishful eye, in search of its perpetual home. The foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth them that are his; having this seal, let all who name the name of Christ, depart from iniquity. In the struggle which the soul maintains with those idols, which have supplanted God, it is often led to contemplate sights that are odious. The overthrow of idolatry, gradually uncovers many deep corruptions, which had lain secluded in the foldings of the heart. But a revolution is accomplishing there, which is to terminate in the impression of a picture of holiness, the image of Jesus, a picture never to fade away.

A distinguished writer on the imagination, has shewn how this faculty may be so affected, by what is great and uncommon, as to be wrought into

a kind of perpetual ecstasy. The world may become, under its inspiring influence, a scene of almost boundless enchantment. But how quickly would the spell be broken up, even by a distant intimation, that the scenes to which the imagination gives birth, were infested by a robber, who would presently appear and plunge a dagger into the bosom. Is not this a feeble image of the circumstances in which man is placed. Let his condition be ever so enviable, Death is a universal robber. For a meeting with him, we should suppose that all mankind would feel the importance of hourly preparation, and put all their powers upon the busiest stretch. We then defy contradiction, when we say, that the researches of philosophy, the gifts of eloquence, skilfulness in war, the splendours of genius, and the most highly cultured imagination, are incapable of furnishing consolation at the hour of death. You might as well point the man, about to be swallowed up in the waves of the ocean, to some landscape, in the neighbourhood of his earthly home. But religion, embraced on a high and holy standard, has furnished, and can still furnish, consolation to dying men. It can display that which is within the veil, alike to the humble saint, or the polished philosopher. The realities of faith, are as perceptible to the eye, lifted up from the wilderness, as from the gorgeous city. Religion, even the despised religion of Jesus, lightens affliction, sweetens our cares, disburdens the heart of its sorrows, extracts

the sharp and pointed sting of death. We admit that Hume died with something like the semblance of composure, but we deny that any words of resignation adorned his lips. Rousseau was romantic in his last moments; but is death a time to be romantic? There might have been a gleam of pensiveness, but it was the pensiveness of defeated hopes, and blighted ambition. All that literature can accomplish, is to provide comforts for the present scene. It can render a man respectable, give him an ascendency in society, or supply his mind with almost unfailing sources of intellectual gratification. It may even look onward to the future ages of the world, and cause him to behold a distant posterity, casting offerings on his tomb. But it is beyond its power to enable him to adjust his last accounts with death, and that holy Judge, a meeting with whom so quickly succeeds the solemnities of death. It cannot implant a sense of guilt on the conscience, or repentance in the heart, or ripen the soul for the bliss of heaven.

We may further extend our views of surmounting these temptations, by considering the entire uselessness of literature, when not directed to proper objects. It is attended with little difficulty, to settle the ends of literature. It is often employed to gain admiration, to extend our fame, or even to acquire property. These things, we know, are incidentally connected with a life devoted to letters, but should not be made the supreme object. He lives to little

purpose, who does not maturely weigh the grand characteristic object, for which he is living. The highest end of literature is to enlighten the minds of men, to chase away ignorance, to supply intelligence to the people, to relieve the sorrows and extinguish the evils of society, to advance the cause of truth and holiness.

Measured by this standard, what usefulness has ever been achieved by Gibbon, Hume, Voltaire, Volney, and a hundred others, who have attracted the admiration of mankind. Something they may have done, in brightening the page of history, by events lucidly detailed. They may have carried language to the highest perfection, or they may have impressed some with a sense of the vaunted dignity of human nature, or they may have assisted statesmen and politicians in forming enlightened views of government, or warned them of the dangers which impend over every government. All this they may have done, and still have nothing but a name to live. They have laboured assiduously to convey scepticism into the mind; they have poisoned their own works; they have unsettled the principles of the young, and unhinged the integrity of the old. The cottager has drunk in infidelity from their writings—whilst kings and princes may continue to riot in their vices, beneath the scrutiny of such historians. But our sorrow is deepened, when we reflect on the amount of good, which these men might have been instrumental in accomplish-

ing. By applying the standard of the Scriptures to the actions of men, and weighing the motives of legislators and princes in the balance of justice, and by shedding the light of Eternity over the scenes in which they appear, the pencil of history, in their hands, might have found an appropriate employment. But they have only sketched the dark and odious picture, so often furnished by the kingdoms of this world, without throwing on it a gleam of hope, that the kingdoms of this world, are one day to become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ.

In connexion with this subject, we ask further, what has science or literature ever done for the human family, where the Author of all mental endowments has not been reverently acknowledged. We will not inquire after the nameless volumes which have had their hour, in amusing the thoughtless tribes of earth? We ask what the works of Plato or Seneca can do in raising human nature from its moral ruins? Take them round the circle of barbarous tribes, by which civilized nations are hemmed in, and try whether the rude barbarian, won by the charms of eloquence, will relinquish his idols; or send them into polished kingdoms, and see whether polished kingdoms will give up their vices.

But we are not to suppose that there is nothing but sheer and naked uselessness in literature. Vivid, indeed, is that line which separates civilized from uncivilized states. In the hands of some men,

literature has done much, because it has been made to know its appropriate place. It has wrought wonders, when taking its stand, as an humble ally, by the side of Christianity.

Men of letters have the best opportunity of examining the evidences of revealed religion. It is therefore natural, that to such men, we should look for those powerful displays of argument which have astonished infidelity, baffling its schemes, and overthrowing its machinations. From the days of the apostles to the present hour, no infidel has remained long unanswered, whose reasonings were worthy of notice.—When Hume advanced to the charge, he took away, on his shield, the name of his conqueror; and when Gibbon laid open his pretended causes of the rapid propagation of Christianity, Watson forever obliterated his pages. The outworks of Christianity have been nobly defended, from time to time, by able champions, equipped in the armour of science, and allowing infidelity to select all its favourite points of attack. Neither can we forget the important services which literature has rendered, in handing down the copies of the scriptures. We know that a special Providence has ever been concerned about the holy books. Providence has never impressed such brilliant footsteps on our world, as those footsteps of his, which, in every age, have gone round the sacred volume, as if he had come to look after that revelation which he gave to man. God could not permit his own mind to be lost from

the memory of man, when he intended that man should be changed by it from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of our God. But literature has often been sent on the important errand, of searching for the Scriptures, of bringing them from the cells where they had been entombed by superstition, of establishing the canon, of judging, weighing, and settling the text. Had Christians neglected this species of learning, then Biblical criticism would have put on a threatening aspect towards Christianity, and thus a wide field of usefulness would have been uncultivated. Consider the vast labours of Biblical critics, whose minds have been adverse to the truth as it is in Jesus, and the insidious attacks they have made on the text and canon of the Scriptures. We can easily imagine the astonishment of the Christian world, at the bold declarations and fancied discoveries of critics, had there been no power lodged in the church, of repelling these declarations, and ferretting out these mere imaginary discoveries.

Who can be unmindful of the Reformation? an event to which we are indebted for such innumerable blessings. The history of the world is a vast record of crime, but in turning over the leaves, we sometimes meet a page gilded with light. But show me so brilliant a page, or so brilliant a chapter in that History, as the one occupied by the Reformation. We have heard of clans becoming free, of states asserting their rights, and countries claiming independence. But this event gave liberty to na-

tions, every where releasing the minds of men from intolerable bondage. But the same voice which called primitive Christianity from the cells of superstition, awakened the energies of the human mind. Then literature and science stood by the reformers, prepared to do their humble part, in rolling away the cloud of ignorance, which had gathered itself thick and heavy around the nations.

Neither can we forget what literature is doing in that general movement which is now making for the conversion of the world. The age of the reformation was not an age of missions. The work of reformers lay within a narrower compass. Still the reformation has doubtless had some influence, whether intimate or remote, in diffusing light on the pagan nations at this day. We are willing to admit that the example of indefatigable popish missionaries, may not have been entirely without influence. They have displayed great energy in filling up the vacancy in the realms of his holiness, by fitting in barbarous, remote, and disjointed kingdoms.

It is not my design to eulogize the present movement which is astonishing the world. The record of the thousands of Israel, who are engaged in it, is on high, and it will be read out on another day, in the face of an assembled universe. We only affirm that literature is helping on the glorious work. The halls of science have furnished many of our laborious men; the purpose of going away

from the endearments of polished life, has been formed in academic groves; translators of the Scriptures have prepared themselves for the work, by a profound acquaintance with the writings of antiquity. Who have uncovered those delusions which lie wrapt up in false systems of religion, and handed out a system infinitely purer in the Scriptures? who have mastered with invincible perseverance, the numerous dialects of the east? who are gathering up the scattered fragments of language among the aborigines that skirt our borders? who are enabling the degraded groups of Africa to read in their own tongue the wonderful works of God? who are encountering the prejudices of Jews, those ancient and inveterate enemies of the faith? who are proclaiming on Mount Gerizzim that Jesus is the Christ? They are scholars, whom Christianity has had in her training.

We come now, in the progress of this discourse, to treat of that light and ornamental work which the imagination, properly subordinated to Christianity, may be putting from time to time upon the temple of our Zion. Here many deep regrets mingle with our feelings. No one who has read the Scriptures can fail to see how God subordinates the imagination to purposes the most sacred. It is a faculty which he has there showed to be capable of the deepest measure of sanctification. Its consecration has more to do with a life of piety than is generally supposed. It has been too often used for

the mere purpose of inventing fables; yet no one can read the book of Psalms without being continually reminded that it is a faculty which may be employed about momentous events, but placing those events in a picturesque attitude before the mind of the reader. It so paints every thing, that we can convey a landscape to a measureless distance. It is that power of the mind which answers to the pencil in the hand of the artist.

The imagination of the Christian partakes in that moral renovation which goes forth on all the powers of his mind. It is then lifted out of its degraded condition where it was enchained to unholy pursuits, to admire the beauties of holiness. Its powers are so transferred, as to bear for the most part on future scenes. But sometimes, when communing with its Maker, it likens this world to the heavenly country. There comes down on the works around us a sweet reflection of Heaven; the ear is filled with melody, and the heart with gladness. We hear our Maker's voice in the wave of the forest, the sound of the waterfall, the roar of the ocean; or at evening, celestial choirs knit together the clouds by golden links, and wrapt in curtains which the Redeemer has drawn around them, chant their choral hymn, whilst the mountains and the valleys seem to echo back the sound to Heaven.

It is time that this faculty had begun to repay Christianity the deep debt it owes her; and in some instances the obligation has been felt, and honour-

ably discharged. Poetry is one of the forms, and constitutes much of the drapery in which the imagination loves to appear. We are aware of the prejudices which exist against making poetry the vehicle of religious truth. But we ought to allow something for a variety of taste, and a difference of structure in the minds of men. The solemn hymn, or the inspiring ode, may reach the heart that will not be touched by the deepest reasoning, or the most powerful declamation.

Genius has exhausted every form of poetical composition. It has employed itself in a striking manner on that species of it termed descriptive, the scene of which is laid among the works of nature. Every glen has been searched, every mountain climbed, and every river celebrated. In epic poetry, the imagination has been tasked to the highest. Here the fierce and warlike passions have been pourtrayed with astonishing fidelity. All the cautious evolutions of contending armies, the skill of generals, the differing qualities of commanders, have been set before the mind. But in the destructive onset, particularly, we see the power of genius to carry the reader wheresoever it pleases. It flings an attraction round the hideous battle in which tens of thousands fall covered with human gore. The influence of all this must be baleful in the extreme. We may reason as we please about the population of the world, and the necessity of war to reduce it; but a field of battle, notwithstand-

ing, is but a miniature representation of the accursed pit.

In elegiac poetry there is something touching. It may and often has a fine moral effect. But many have sung of the vanity of the world, the emptiness of fame, the deceitfulness of beauty, who have proposed no adequate source of consolation in place of all this decay, disappointment and death.*

The Holy Scriptures give us specimens of the several kinds of poetry. To these it is needless to direct the attention of the reader. It may be necessary, however, to remark, that there are some points of moral distinction betwixt the poetry of the Bible, and all other poetry. We behold in that of the Scriptures, an unquenchable desire to exalt the majesty of God. The reader is not permitted to pause so much on the genius of the writer, as on the grandeur of the Being whom he intends to exalt. When the writer indites the Lyric ode, it is as if he had lifted up the weighty harp of an angel. When he pours a tide of melody over creation, the hand of the Creator is seen to guide it. In the hundredth and fourth Psalm, the Psalmist speaks of all the varied works around him. If he look to the sea, God is there; to the rivers, God is there; to the wilderness, God is there; no spot so secluded, no nook so furtive, but God is there; as

* The writer would here direct the attention of the reader to a discourse by Dr. Chalmers, entitled "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection."

much there as if there were no heavens visible to our sight, no curtains hung around the world, no ocean, woods or rivulets. Creation is to him but as a burning ladder, by which he ascends to the throne of the Creator, and descends again among these his inferior works.

All human poetry is bounded by time. It enters not into eternity. It plays and takes its pastime in this dim world, finding here its home—when the world smiles, it is pleased—not so with the Scriptures. Blessed volume, full of sweet persuasion, holy precepts, precious doctrines, stupendous miracles, abundant promises, and impassioned odes.

A few remarks, in reference to fictitious composition, will bring this part of the subject to a close.

It may be proper here to notice the diversified labours in this department, of a distinguished writer of fiction, whose works have been read by young and old. We believe that these productions have done some good, but the good will not counterbalance the evil. Let us, however, do justice to his merits as a writer. Scarcely ever were such graphic powers given to man, either for the face of external nature, or for the display of human character and passions. If he select the abode of a Scottish peasant, we forget for a while the comforts of a palace; or if he select a palace, it throws the hamlet into obscurity; or a castle or tower in ruins, the eye is immediately opened on the relics of decayed magnificence. The days of chivalry are re-

vived. The wars of contending clans, led by enterprising chieftains, or the wars of nations on a larger scale, are placed before us with equal ease. He plants the banner of insurrection on the mountain or in the valley, and the cliff or the glen pours forth its intrepid defenders. Familiar alike with the courts of princes, the legendary history of baronial manors, or human nature in its humblest forms, he expatiates far and wide, the world the inheritance of his genius, and Scotland its endeared home.

But we have objections to urge against these productions. The irreverent use of the name of God so often made, and that irreverence committed to the press, and perpetuated to remote generations, lies as an awful blemish in the midst of his most striking sentiments. Suppose in each landscape drawn by this writer, there was a visible defect, some object kept away necessary to its perfection. Such a line of blemishes would seriously abate our intellectual pleasure. But there is a more serious abatement of moral pleasure in the mind of every pious reader, at every recurrence of a broad and shocking defect in his moral landscapes.

We further object to the unhallowed use which is so often made of the Holy Scriptures, attempting to render ridiculous some of their sublimest passages and finest events; putting them into the lips of tumultuous men, as if the Bible were a mere text book on which the licentious might draw to sanction their deeds.

We take exception to the low standard which is established, by which human actions are to be tried. We have no erection of the standard of Christianity, even in sight of its preachers. Blood is shed under very suspicious circumstances without condemnation, whilst the claims of Christianity are made to sit lightly on the conscience of Jews, marauders, and pirates.

We can easily see how this writer might have been equally powerful without impairing our confidence in his reverence for divine institutions. Our hearts are linked to Scotland by no common ties, and so are the hearts of thousands who roam in the wilds of America. From it many of us have derived our forms of worship and our sacred principles. We revere the simplicity and faithfulness of its pastors, the integrity of her martyrs, the sanctity of her Sabbaths, its peaceful dales, its mountains moistened by the blood of her people. But this writer, in some instances, has gone far to break up these associations; and the regret among Christians is deep as it is universal.

The love of fiction constitutes a powerful temptation. It is difficult to break, and when its dominion is broken, it often returns upon the heart. But Christianity can so subdue and regulate it, as to give it a cautious appropriation to her interests.

From the foregoing general discussion, we draw some important inferences.

1st. Christianity is not inimical to literature.

Many have represented the system as unfriendly to liberal and elegant pursuits. But the proof of this would go far to set aside its sanctions, for she holds the same authoritative language to all men, whatever their pursuits may be. She wages war with nothing but that which degrades our nature: how then can Christianity wage war with that which exalts and adorns our nature? It cannot be shown from her records that ignorance is to be countenanced. She is scattering over the earth, not feeble rays of light, but the meridian blaze of truth and knowledge: how then can she smile on men held in the thraldom of intellectual darkness?

But it is sometimes supposed, that whilst the Christian system may give countenance to many kinds of literature, that it is hostile, in a special manner, to classical science. This supposition is without foundation. We are not indeed prepared to say that the classical writers should be promiscuously read by our youth—Neither are we prepared to say that the writers of any age should be indiscriminately studied by young or old. Who has ever heard of that happy age which has given birth to a set of writers whose pages are entirely free from blemishes? The jealousy of many, however, arises from this cause, that whilst, in modern writings, there is no danger of meeting with divine honours ascribed to false deities, there is in classical writings a constant recurrence to these deities. But a want of conformity to Christianity in writers who

have lived since its introduction, may be as injurious to the mind, as conformity to a false system in heathen writers. No one can be so well prepared to contrast Christianity and polytheism, as he who is acquainted with both systems. The fame of heathen gods has passed away. Jehovah has cast them down from the fancied height to which they had been elevated by human depravity. We may read of their exploits, but we are sensible that a system, infinitely purer, shines upon their dark and ruined temples. Juggernaut was once drawn in triumph; but God hath said, Stand still thou bloody Moloch.

But though there be serious defects in classical writers, they still possess much to be admired. They are perpetual models of taste. Their sentiments are often just and full of truth. There is at times a pensiveness of thought which is deepened by the reflection, that between us and them ages have rolled away—They link the earliest and latest ages of the world. They identify our own and their mental employments, and we are left to infer the endless duration of minds that can thus stand out from age to age in recorded grandeur.

It is due to the ministry to inquire, whether Christianity be hostile to literature, with a special reference to that responsible station which they occupy in the church. By the ministry, science should be cultivated with deep humility. When ministers enter with warmth into disputed literary points, or even into theological discussion, manifest-

ing a haughty and dogmatical pride of opinion, dishonour accrues to the meek religion of Jesus. If there be an object abhorrent to men of wisdom, it is the preacher of the gospel, who, in consequence of his attainments, lords it over his brethren. The rule of our Saviour is, that he that is least shall be greatest in his kingdom.

Neither should any attainments diminish their entire dependence on the Holy Spirit for success. The increase is of God. Eloquence may do any thing but awaken sinners. Scientific ministers have been most successful, only when they have been characterized by a simple reliance on the energy of a Sovereign Spirit.

Nor should any thing lessen the necessity for action in the cause of Jesus. The wants of men, and the waste places of Zion, are too numerous to permit ministers to spend an undue portion of time on the couch of literary ease. For the minister of the sanctuary, the character of Paul is far better than that of Plato.

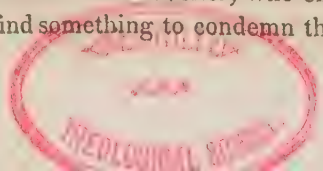
We cannot justify ministers in the appropriation of their time, to the production of some kinds of literature; namely, the novel or the drama.* The propriety of these is questionable as constituting the pursuits of any, much less of the ministry. The preachers of the gospel are to attach supreme importance to moral qualifications for their peculiar work. Mankind love to contemplate them in their

* We except the works of Milman.

insulated character. Their duties lie in humble life, principally among the obscure, in the dwellings of the ignorant, by the beds of the sick and the dying.

But we repeat it, that Christianity is not hostile to literature. Even painting and poetry receive her warmest smile of encouragement, when they do not transgress the barriers which are reared for their honourable security. She has laid down for one poet the basis of a work on which the broad seal of immortality is now impressed. She has furnished a vast collection of subjects for the pencil, from all that is sublime and astonishing in miracles, to all that is tender in the simplicity of the hamlet, and all that is melting in the solitude of the cottage. The pencil has been busy among her patriarchs and prophets. The scenes unrolled by her, have been reviewed by the artist, and they will bear to be sketched and hung up for the admiration of the world.

But we must not expect that Christianity can award to every thing in the shape of literature, an indiscriminate approbation. How can she approve of that, however adorned by language, the tendency of which is to sap her principles and undermine her sanctions? How, of that philosophy, which soaring to the skies, looks down contemptuously on the mysteries enclosed in her sacred books; or of the researches of the traveller, who explores every nook, to find something to condemn the Scriptures,



and after returning disappointed, sets out again on the fruitless search? How can she look complacently on those efforts of the imagination, that so depict the splendours of war, as to fire the heart with a resistless passion for the work of carnage; or of that which paints the character of robbers in alluring colours? Can she approve of the drama, the deep plot of which is unravelled to throw fascination over vice; or of tragic scenes, that wind up in the plunge of the poniard and the gush of human blood? Or can Christianity smile on that, in which genius has woven its sweetest numbers to inflame the licentious passions; or of the tale of fiction that so dresses up the felicities of life, as to make us forget that we belong to a fallen species, and to a world, of which God, who cannot lie, affirms that it lieth in wickedness?

2d. Though Christianity gives her approbation to literature, nothing is more certain than that her supremacy must be acknowledged. It must be established in the heart. She cannot yield the palm. Her truths are all important, her precepts are broad, her discoveries bright and glorious, her miracles splendid, her doctrines sublime, and her law a girdle stretched round the earth, and enclosing all that live on its surface. In comparison with her records, all literature is to be regarded as the light dust of the balance. By the standard of supreme love for her interests, all classes of men must be tried, and if found wanting, brought in guilty before a God of

purity. Her law of atonement binds all men—Repent and believe the Gospel. The provisions of this atonement are addressed to all men, and enforced by those new penalties by which that atonement is surrounded. The philosopher, the statesman, the poet, the hero, must accept eternal life as a free gift through our Lord Jesus Christ.

3d. God is the author of all mental endowments; therefore the glory of all mental endowments is his due—He that planted the eye, shall he not see—He that made the ear, shall he not hear—He that formed the understanding, shall he not inquire after its application. Man is wonderfully made in his body, how much more wonderfully in his soul. It is God that made the mind. He enables the imagination to work such wonders, disclosing all its hidden treasures. He forms the skies, the lakes, the lawns, among which it revels from day to day. He intends to make it one of the sources of perennial bliss.

Oh how do holy beings delight in the consecration of themselves to God. Every angel, when he lifts himself up from deep musing on his perfections, it is to cast some new tribute at his feet, or to drop from his harp some burning ode, or stretching his wings for flight, returns with some new wreath, gathered far away on the outskirts of nature.

4th. Moral excellence is to be preferred to intellectual excellence. By moral excellence, we mean

the religion of the gospel. Infidelity has tried to set up a distinct kind of excellence as residing in the intellectual powers. If we separate them, it is infinitely better to be a pious than an intellectual man; but if we keep them united, moral excellence is to be supremely cultivated.

Look at this in what light you will, and there is a deep necessity that man should be possessed of that kind of goodness developed in the Scriptures. It is an excellence that will regulate all his intellectual powers, giving a proper tone to the mind, and blending in the best proportion the operations of the understanding and the operations of the life.

Some men make display the supreme object for which they live. They may cultivate eloquence, and illustrate truth, or be distinguished in the field, but all terminates inevitably upon self. In this there is more for the follower of Jesus to abhor, than in any overt act of the most blinded idolatry.

We say that the world is too full of evils to permit the cultivation of such a character, and if the world were clear of its evils, such a standard of character would never be defended. Is there not something more noble in him who pursues science, that he may do his part in extirpating the evils of the world, and lightening the burden of human woe.

An admiration of a false standard of character is the overthrow of thousands—Many a precious youth is daily sacrificed at the shrine of ambition—Vic-

tims are daily ready as oblations to the idols set up in our guilty world. But if the Scriptures contain a record of the mind of God, then all such views must one day cover their possessor with the bitterest disappointment. We can conceive of no disappointment equal to that which overtakes, at the hour of death, the man who nourishes in his heart this unsubdued ambition.

How profound are the reflections of the pious scholar, on the vanity of literature, at some moment of elevated devotion. It is in vain then to tell him of the sublimity of Hannibal crossing the Alps, or of Alexander sighing for another world, on which to try the power of his sword. He himself has achieved something which has an infinitely higher bearing on his eternal destiny. Standing in the lucid presence of God, the conqueror, amid a triumph, would seem to him shrouded in midnight darkness. Without envy could he look upon the fame of Homer, though a hundred cities may claim his birth, or on that of the Mantuan bard, though innumerable crowds be flocking to his tomb.

5th. It is the duty of Christians to exercise a guardianship over the press. The press is capable of doing immense mischief or good, according to the direction given to it. If literature be abandoned to the irreligious, it puts into their hands a powerful weapon. Principles the most pestilential will find their way into every village in our land. Profane ballads will be sung from one end of the con-

tinent to the other, by our mountaineers, when they reap down our harvests; by watermen, who traverse our noble rivers, and by our mariners, as they hover around distant shores and islands. If there be nothing to counteract the influence of a misguided literature, our country is ruined. But there is such an influence. Let this counteracting literature be cherished by Christians. Let them select places for the education of their children, of which God shall approve; and not for the sake of literary advantages abandon them, unexperienced, to the snares of designing men. Otherwise, we tempt God; whereas he tempteth no man.

The present state of religious periodical literature claims the attention of Christians. A partial support is given to many publications, whilst the religious interests of our country call loudly for one at least to be widely circulated. If we send our agents for a thousand purposes, why not distribute them far and wide about a business of such high importance? Why not make this a matter of ecclesiastical legislation, till the work is done?

Finally, they are living to little purpose, who do not live in a supreme attachment to Christianity. The day is quickly coming, in which philosophers, kings and peasants, must appear before their Judge. Whatever the distance between them here, they must then meet on a common level.—The truth of the text will then be evinced with incalculable solemnity. God tempteth no man.

It is indeed true, that our men of literature are living for immortality; but not that distinctive immortality revealed in the Scriptures. To be forever enshrined in the memory of man, they improve each passing moment. To live in the admiration of posterity—this is unequivocally declared to be enchantment. Alas! there is no such immortality; for the earth is to be burned up, the heavens to be on fire, and the elements to melt with fervent heat.

But suppose the man of letters gain his object, that he leave productions that will last while time holds on its way; suppose he throw perpetual enchantment round his earthly cottage, or on the stream which he often haunted, or on the mountain whence he surveyed surrounding nature;—what, after all, has he gained? Alas! the sound of his name in the ear of a distant posterity cannot reach him. It cannot roll away the stone from his sepulchre, or burst the seal wherewith death has sealed up his tomb. His fame will then be to him as the sound of the waterfall in a mighty desert, that, from the creation of the world, never heard a human footstep.

But we anticipate a period, when all the objects of literature shall be encompassed with infinite ease. The golden age of Christianity has never yet arrived, but it is on the way to enrich all the families of the earth. Imagination has feigned it, poetry has sighed, and disappointment has longed for it—but prophecy alone has accurately depicted it.

Then shall the earth present a scene of unrivalled and unbroken delightfulness, that might tempt the pencil of an angel. Every living thing that this round world contains, shall then be moving upward and onward to the fountain of felicity. New and delightful sources of intercourse shall be opened with Heaven, upon which angels shall oft impress their brilliant and reiterated footsteps. By a word, God will turn this ruined region of his works into one of his verdant pastures, and all its families shall be winding their way to the paradise above. Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

DISCOURSE II.

The Literature of the Scriptures.

"Search the Scriptures."—*John* v. 39.

The Scriptures were not given with the view of enlightening mankind in philosophy or eloquence, in science or literature. They look unceasingly towards the regeneration of the heart. They urge men continually to cross that broad line, which separates a state of guilt from a state of purity before our Maker. But in accomplishing this, they often deal out information the most important, making every thing auxiliary to the grand design of leading the heart to the love of holiness.

It is our intention in this discourse, to take an outline of the Scriptures, with a view of ascertaining whether the Scriptures can in any way be regarded as hostile to literature, or in other words, whether they have not communicated information, which will ever relieve them from such a charge. But in starting this inquiry, it is proper to remark, that a man of humble piety may be alarmed at any

attempt to place the Scriptures in such an attitude, lest they be reduced to the level of a human book. We feel a consciousness that our desire to exalt the Scriptures is inextinguishable. Believing most profoundly in their inspiration, we could not willingly inflict on them a causeless injury. They are a continual feast to thousands of men. They gild our path in prosperity, and in adversity they are the only light that shines in our disconsolate dwellings. Do you wish to know their value, ask the martyr in his dungeon, the prisoner in his cell, or the pious mariner on the tempestuous night in which his vessel is wrecked. Or knock at the door of some upland habitation, and ask its inmate what he would take for the volume of inspiration, that crowns his shelf; or bend your footsteps far away into the wilderness, and inquire of the hermit in his cave, whilst his eye, at the hour of evening prayer, is fastened on its pictures of heaven. Ask the pious senator and statesman in the heart of the populous city, or visit the tent of the soldier on the eve of an engagement, and there adjust its value. Blessed volume! without it, man would be a barbarian, the mind unenlightened, and the heart relentless; the garments of the warrior more deeply drenched in blood; the desert would teem with robbers, and the ocean with fiercest pirates.

The following might be an interesting inquiry, if we had an opportunity of ascertaining the result of such an experiment. Suppose a man, in the morn-

ing of life, were to make the Bible the source and central point of intellectual attainment. He might be allowed to study the Scriptures in such a way as to become best acquainted with their contents. We would permit him to make himself master of all those branches of knowledge, to which he would be inevitably led by their constant perusal. The question is, would he be a learned man, in the evening of life; a man of vigorous mind, or a man of feeble and impoverished intellect. It is answered, that the experiment has never been fairly tried; but so far as it has been tried, we have no cause to tremble at the consequences of such an experiment. It is with almost unequalled veneration, we mention the name of Locke. If Milton had a key by which he unlocked the interior temple of Nature, and beheld her altars covered with perennial greenness, and her curtains woven by the fingers of God, Locke found as easy an entrance into the realms of the mind, where he beheld a more magnificent temple, and though in ruins, it bears unquestionable marks of a glory that is departed. We are told by the biographers of Locke, that the latter years of his life were spent in the retirement of Oates, where he devoted himself unreservedly to the study of the Scriptures. What sight, we ask, most affects our hearts; Locke in the turmoil of public life, or when we view him haunting the shady thicket, or the flowering arbour, deeply musing on the mind of God? It is affirmed of Newton, that he would

often pause in his abstruse inquiries, to catch a glance at the page of inspiration; for he found there a steadier light than that which glowed in the sun, or sparkled from the planets. He knew and felt it to be the message of Him who said, Let there be light, and who made the stars also. But to return a moment to the poet of Paradise Lost. Many ages have intervened between him and the time of Homer, or even the time of the graceful bard of Mantua. Yet has he taken his place by the side of these lofty poets, over whose memory hoary ages have flung the mantle of an ever during remembrance. His name is every where engraven in the same verdant slopes that lie up and down the hill that leads to the temple of fame, a temple that forever enshrines all that have once passed within its golden gates. Milton was deeply versed in every species of knowledge; he studied every science, he was familiar with every art, he travelled far and wide, gazed on the paintings of antiquity, whilst the stores of Greek and Latin literature were brought distinctly to his view—Still it is acknowledged by those who are skilled in criticism, and who habitually explore the sources of intellectual eminence, that Milton was possessed of a Hebrew soul. At the Scriptures, his loftiest inspirations were kindled, his heart was mellowed into tenderness, and his imagination wrought into a power equal to the delineation of unblemished Eden.

But we have been detained, by these reflections,

from what was intended to be the substance of this discourse. We shall take a cursory view of the Literature of the Scriptures, and this discussion will give rise to some remarks of a practical nature.

History is one of the pursuits from which literary men derive no small amount of instruction. It has been defined, as philosophy, teaching by example. That mind must be in a state of feebleness, and even infancy, that knows nothing but what has taken place within the circle of its own observation. Our youth are earnestly incited to store their minds with historic lore, if they wish to shine in the cabinet or in the field. It is indeed an exquisite gratification to ponder the page of antiquity, enlivened as it is, with the characteristic qualities of men of other times. Here we behold the Carthaginian on his way to the gates of Rome; Leonidas defending with invincible courage the pass of Thermopylæ; or Cincinnatus resigning the peaceful employments of rural life, serving his country, and then returning to his plough. In the records of ancient history, there are events of a seemingly ennobling character, and in some instances, events that are really useful. We discover gleams of intellectual greatness, astonishing courage and noble decision. We are compelled to do justice to the virtues that take their rise on the fields of Paganism, because Christianity need not go beyond her own records to display virtues and actions infinitely nobler. Coming into modern history, we shall find events equally

numerous—the rise of states, the settlement of territories, the overthrow of kingdoms, the depopulation of cities, the dethronement of kings, the re-establishment of monarchs who have wandered long in exile, who have found a temporary refuge in distant palaces, or hovered unknown in the hiding places of their own dominions; and all along the extensive line of history we occasionally catch a glimpse of the church, sometimes weeping under persecution, or emerging from obscurity, bearing the tokens of the presence of that King whom God hath set upon his holy hill of Zion.

But there is a point beyond which the most ancient records cannot go. Into those unknown fields of the doings of men, we are guided only by the glimmering light of tradition. But at this very point, revelation takes up the bewildered mind of man. Its pure and steadfast light burns back even into the bowers of Paradise. Here it begins the eventful history of our race. Poetry has sung of the golden age, but Revelation alone has displayed the riches of that period in the innocence of man. What must have been the emotions of the first man in beholding the scenery of nature, we may faintly conceive, but who can adequately describe. Had he seen chaos gradually reduced to order, and one beauty after another evolving from the rich and mysterious mind of God, words of adoration would have often broke from his lips. But who can conceive the burst of admiration that gushed warm

from his heart, when all the tints of creation were first thrown upon him, in their overpowering fulness—when the sun first shed a line of splendour on the mountains, and held on his brilliant way, till his chariots paused awhile in the west. Then came forth the evening star that burnt in unusual brightness, and stood all night above his couch of repose, a regal pledge from the King of kings. Our world was then innocent, but the lapse of six thousand years has wrought a multitude of changes. It is like the painting that wears the aspect of age, and bears within its bosom one who delights to strip away its glory. The fall of man is the most important piece of history, save the history of redemption. Revelation is satisfactory here; but how confused are the views of heathen tradition, and how bewildered are the views of those who are speculating upon it, when they should be making it the groundwork of a repentance unto life.

A classification of several points of history, is all that can be wished for, in this general view. The deluge, the confusion of tongues, the call of Abraham, the exaltation of Joseph, the exodus, the settlement of the tribes in the promised land. There is a large space filled by the annals of the church, lying between these events and the time when our Saviour descended on earth. Through all this tract, profane historians owe much to the Scriptures. Let us suppose that any uninspired historian, possessing the authentic testimonials of Moses, his

clearness and fulness in recording the same events, together with his strict and unbending impartiality, how would his record be searched and pondered. What eager inquiries after the information contained in it, and how would the lover of history feed upon it from day to day—

As hungry Jew on his own manna.

Connected partly with their history, is the biography of the Scriptures. This is history in miniature. The historian of a kingdom may lawfully glance at the life of its king, and the biographer of a king may occasionally look at the prosperity or declension of the realms that lie beneath his sceptre. But if he would satisfactorily pursue his work, the subject of biography must occupy the chief place in his thoughts.

Biography enters intimately into literature. We are always prying into the secret life and the private records of those whom we admire. An instinctive veneration for relics more or less fills every human mind. The fields of the soldier are consecrated by triumphal arches, fields where the sound of the bugle sommoned thousands to their fate. Let the traveller pause at the villa of Tully, and his mind, in defiance of itself, will revolve the greatness of the orator; or let the scholar look upon the tent of the hero, and how quickly, for a while, will he forget his congenial pursuits.

But of every kind of biography, the most inte-

resting, certainly, to men of literary taste, is that which is employed about kindred spirits, men who have spent their lives in the painful search of truth, in investigating the laws of nature, in exploring the philosophy of the mind, in the culture of the imagination, and those many embellishments which adorn the path of elegant literature. None can doubt that the genius of Cowper has thrown a sanctity around the hamlet where he lived, or that Young, Thomson, Addison, and Akenside, have consecrated the spot of their earthly abode.

This veneration for departed worth, inherent in the mind, is not forgotten in the Scriptures. The page of inspiration is alive with worthies, and though the graphic power of modern writing be not found in it, there is still immense value in all its biographical details. It is true that the Scriptural biography wears a sober and sedate aspect, because it is intended to be subsidiary to the leading design of impressing the heart with a resistless desire after holiness. But it makes us pause with Abraham beneath the spreading oak. We rear the altar of oblation, we stretch his lowly tent on hill or dale, and receive at the door of his dwelling the triple choir of angels. We ascend Mount Moriah, or return with him to his much loved home, and behold him there as we look at the mariner who has lately been tost in the tempest. Or we take the landscape of flocks and herds, and well watered plains, spread out by inspiration, in which the pa-

triarch appears in holy tranquillity. Who has not rode round Egypt in the chariot of Joseph, or been with Moses on the banks of the Nile, or heard the words with which the burning bush was vocal.

But let patriarchs and prophets disappear, for with what fidelity is the life of Jesus interwoven with the sacred page, from the time he wept in the manger, to the time he ascended the cross, and exclaimed, It is finished! Cold as marble must that heart be, which cannot feel, whilst inspiration prolongs the delightful theme. It is admitted, that were there nothing else to prove the divine original of the Scriptures, that the character of Jesus, and the manner of its exhibition, would be sufficient. Rousseau has acknowledged this, with a fulness of conviction, most delicately expressed. But without Geography, History would be a dead letter; and Biography would be uninteresting, unless we knew the haunts of those whom it commemorates. The Scriptures have given us a large portion of geography, not philosophically, but incidentally. The writers interweave it with their narratives, episodes, and prophecies. In this view, as well as all others, the Bible is a wonderful book, a venerable monument of ancient times. Countries are described, so far as they have any connexion with the church and the fulfilment of the Divine purposes. Cities are revealed to us as they stood in the days of the prophets. Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Sidon, Jerusalem, rise to view in all their metropolitan

splendour. Rivers, seas, lakes, oceans, mountains, plains and forests, are distinctly set before the mind. In the journeys of Israel, the writers consecrate each spot, above which paused the mysterious pillar of cloud by day, or fire by night. The towns of the Canaanites, the siege and sack of cities, the submission of conquered districts, are spoken of with astonishing definiteness. The tribes are portioned out into their several abiding places, and the boundaries of each marked by vivid lines. When we come into the New Testament, we have the geography detailed, with, if possible, an increase of minuteness. Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Italy, Greece, the islands of the Mediterranean, the Lesser Asia, and all those petty kingdoms which surrounded the holy land. The sacred writers have forever thrown an interest over large tracts of eastern countries, an interest that is felt by all that travel over those extensive regions. No one has ever stood by the Jordan, or in sight of the Patriarch's well, who, by referring to the sacred page, can say, that the prospect brings in the record guilty of inaccuracy. None has ever stood on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias, who can allege that the scenery is not as correctly, though not so poetically pourtrayed, as that which environs Loch Lomond. These writers expatiate far and wide, making all things tributary to the giving forth of God's revealed will. And it is a noble testimony to the truth of the Scriptures, that some travellers have

passed over these countries with the sacred volume in their hands, who have closely compared the record, and its geographical literature. In this connexion we may remark upon the chronology of the Scriptures. It does not come within our province here to reconcile any discrepancies which may appear in Biblical chronology, or to argue whether the world be older or younger than it is represented to be by the Hebrew historian. But we assert, that the chronology of the Scriptures has stood the test of the most malignant investigation. In speaking of the literature of the Scriptures, we may glance at their delineation of ancient manners. It is the part of literature to transmit to posterity the manners and customs of the times, as there may be shades of difference in the habits of each succeeding age. It is the office of the historian, in carrying us back to remote ages, to make us feel that we are surveying men, like ourselves indeed, but men, borrowing the complexion of their habits from a difference in the structure of their religion, the constitution of government, or from a hundred other sources. If a poet lay his scene in a wilderness, inhabited by some barbarous tribe, we enter immediately into the costume of the tribe. There is a species of literature, the professed object of which is to catch the aspect of the times, the peculiarities of men, as well as the varied moods of the mind.

In the Scriptures, the delineation of manners is nothing but a copy of nature. The page that re-

cords them, is simple as the customs which then prevailed. Though partaking largely in the depravity of our race, men were not then skilled in the ceremonies of courts. Then judges sat in the gates, rulers held their court beneath the oak, princes watched their flocks, and kings moved along in the stateliness of conscious integrity. Altars were suddenly reared, pillars erected, stones set up, and mounds designated, as commemorative of passing events. To customs of this kind, there are constant allusions in the utterance of moral sentiments, or devout aspirations. The book of Job bears internal marks of great antiquity. If the scene be laid in Arabia, what a picture have we in it, of the manners of those by whom the patriarch was surrounded. Who that is fond of intellectual pursuits, would be willingly deprived of such a treasure of knowledge.

There is a perpetuity in oriental customs, which obtains nowhere else. Accordingly, in reading books of Eastern travels, we are immediately transferred into the midst of scenes depicted in the Bible. We see camels winding along the desert, flocks roving in the meadows, companies gathered round the wells, and pilgrims erecting the frail nightly tabernacle, which disappears with the morning light. If we come into later periods, we see an habitual attendance on the appointed feasts of Israel; the ceremony of going at stated times to Jerusalem; the custom of anointing prophets, priests, and kings: an ad-

miration of the heavenly bodies, by which their feasts were, in a measure, regulated; pious hymns, composed for their journeys, modes of husbandry, gardening, and even dress. It is the power which he possesses of making us acquainted with ancient manners, which renders the Odyssey of Homer valuable in the estimation of many; if so, the Scriptures should not be less valued, because of their descriptiveness.

Poetry holds a conspicuous place in literature. That of the Scriptures may not be suited to a modern taste. It lacks the gaiety and flexibility, which mark the fancy, when appropriated to objects distant from religion. There is poetry now, of every hue and cadence. What is there beneath the etherial blue that has not been sung? What wild recess of nature has not been explored? or where is the clime, into which the active mind of man has not found its way. The love of something addressed to the imagination, is natural to man. Scarce a distinguished individual ever lived, who did not, at some period or other of his life, attempt to utter the language, or lisp the numbers of poetry. A great part of our literature is now delivered to us in that form, into which it has been moulded by the imagination. It may here be asked, whether we would banish all works of taste and fancy, in which religion is not the leading theme. To this question a reply will be given in a subsequent discourse. For the present, it will be sufficient to re-

mark, that every thing of a licentious tendency, should be excluded from all the operations of the mind.

The world contains nothing chaster than the poetry of the Hebrews. It is purely devoted to God. It strips away the curtains of the skies, and approaches boldly, but meekly, into the presence of Him who dwells in boundless and inaccessible majesty. It there lays down its tribute. It carries up constant offerings, selected from the hills and vales of Palestine, the land of vineyards and olive-yards, of springs and fountains. Over it all, is cast a sedate and subdued reverence, that awes the mind into adoration, or melts it down to the tenderness of prayer. In what favoured region of the earth, shall we find the most deeply blushing wreaths, ever woven by the hand of genius? In a land where that genius was inspired: where God dwelt between the cherubim, and often met his bards in the glen, or by the rock, in the field or in the temple. Compare we the sentimental strains of the day with this hallowed inspiration! when the world was young, and inspired men could meet their God, in the morning, noon or night, even face to face; when the sparkling bush could speak aloud to the shepherd—when, before the eyes of men, the rock could wind out a beautiful waterfall—when the river, that for ages flowed in its appointed channel, at a word, heaved back its waters, and revealed its rocks, its beds of shells, and heaps of golden gems? Would

we compare the eagle, whose wing is always burning in the sun, to the bird, that with gay, though varied plumage, is always sporting in the bower? Tell me not of the harps of Greece—It is but a faint warbling about gods, and battles, and nature. The immortal spirit drinks not the feeble strain. We need holier music, like that which flows fast by the oracle of God, when holy men touched the harp, and unseen angels enwreathed their fingers, to make melody on its strings.

In this general view it would not be proper to omit the ethics of the Scriptures. If there be a necessity for studying any branch of knowledge, it is those moral systems which unfold our duties, and teach us to regulate our lives. Man is daily entangled in the thickets of error, and involved in the labyrinths of sin. The most settled virtue may be shaken to pieces, by an unexpected blast of temptation. The warnings of experience are forgotten, the maxims of philosophy overthrown, and the dictates of reason are scattered to the winds, when the reins of indulgence are cast upon the neck of resistless passion. Boast we of strength, while standing away from the supports of the gospel. The pebble might as well boast of its strength when cast into the foaming cataract, or the insect when thrown into the burning furnace. Where, then, is the moral system, which can fortify us against our passions, rectify the disorders of our nature, quell our pride, subdue the spirit of revenge, and reduce

us into a humility becoming dependent creatures. We may repair in haste to fountains of wisdom, or knock at the gates of the Academy, or listen for the responses of Heathen oracles. We may go to the anchorite, or the misanthrope, and after hearing their paternal admonition, we may say to each, Who made thee a judge and ruler over us? or we may address that more pungent rebuke—Physician, heal thyself.

The most cultivated understanding is, in itself, no safeguard for man, though purified by the power of the gospel, it may act the part of an humble sentinel. No systems of philosophy can be a standard, by which to try our actions. The maxims of the world, and the maxims of revelation, are always at variance. Human powers are too limited to find out the whole duty of man.

But revelation gives out its ethical principles with undisputed authority. It begins at the heart, taking cognizance of the motives, and laying open the soul to the continual inspection of a Being, whose eye is all-searching. It instructs at all points. The humble Christian, who dwells in the woods, knows more of human duty, than Socrates or Tully, though he may not be able to trace that duty by tedious argument. Can that man ever be lost in serious error, who daily ponders such authoritative precepts as,—Love your enemies—Visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.—Love not the world—Seek first the kingdom of God.—When thou pray-

est, enter into thy closet? Is it not in lands that have received the light of the gospel, that man has displayed the profoundest benevolence to his fellow man. Where are asylums for the children of indigence, retreats for the insane, and a shelter for the destitute sick. Are our men of philosophy, or our men of Christianity, doing most for the world.

Let us consider a moment the sublimity of the Scriptures. There is one feature in that sublimity worthy of notice, we mean the uniformity with which they compass every lofty subject. So constituted is the mind of man, that it relaxes after some astonishing effort, as the nerves of the warrior may be relaxed, after some stupendous battle. But the sublimity of the sacred writers never becomes impaired by reiterated efforts. Whenever they speak of God, there is majesty in the thought, and simplicity in the language. His attributes stand out prominently. His providence reacheth over the universe. The plan of redemption took its rise in eternity, and was executed with an inflexible decision. The dying expressions of the Saviour, and all the attendant circumstances of the crucifixion, are incomparably tender and elevated. The moral government of God is enforced with dignity; and, in alarming the impenitent, the thunder never ceases to roll on the page of revelation. Not less striking is the beauty of the Scriptures. We do not contend that they are written with classical elegance, and with those coy and furtive graces

that distinguish ingenious writers. The cultivation of such beauties would have been unworthy the noble message with which the writers were entrusted. But the Holy One who inspired the Scriptures, often displays wonderful condescension, in the selection of tender scenes, on which to fix the mind. We see here, not a dazzling, but a deeply retiring beauty, which consists in placing every object and event before the reader in its native simplicity.

Having presented this general sketch of the Scriptures, with a view of showing that they are not hostile to literature, we proceed to the exhibition of several truths, grounded on the discussion.

1st. Christianity, as revealed in the Scriptures, was not given to enlighten mankind in literature. Had this been the object of the Scriptures, their details would have been different. Their design is infinitely more momentous, being intended to enforce on a guilty world the Divine law, that men, discovering that law to be every where broken, may betake themselves to him who magnified it. We may become acquainted with Philosophy, from numerous sources; but there is only one source, from whence we can derive a knowledge of salvation, through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Science and literature must follow in the wake of Christianity. But there are extremes in error. One extreme is to represent the Scriptures, as conveying no important information, except as concerns salvation; that even independent of our im-

mediate duty to comply with the overtures of reconciliation, they do not abound in moral precepts beneficial to society; and that they have no influence upon the mind, independent of that efficacy which it is desirable they should possess upon the conscience. There cannot be a question of their power to train the mind to a stature of intellectual greatness, even though they should not lodge upon the heart of the student one gracious principle, or deposit there a solitary particle of the mysterious germ of regeneration. But a less innocent error certainly is, to look upon them as a book of mere human science. There have been barristers, who have made the Bible the basis of their jurisprudence, whilst the life of him who appeals to it, is hostile to its sacred injunctions. There have been senators, who have indefatigably studied the Scriptures, because of their sublimity and simplicity. This is well, if advocates and senators appear habitually environed by Christian character—but the text dissipates every fond delusion, by telling us to search the Scriptures supremely, because they testify of Jesus, the only hope of man.

Analogous to this mode of studying the Scriptures, is one, which concerns their interpretation. We have men in our country, whose learning is proudly claimed, and far too exclusively acknowledged, who are always carrying into their interpretation the light of reason. According to their views, the Scriptures are a collection of oriental

allegories; regeneration, a fable; atonement, a bold figure of speech; sanctification, an indefinable something, to distinguish an external belief in the Scriptures, from the stubborn atheism of the heathen. As to the fall, it took place in some upper region; but the history has been transferred, for the warning and edification of our race. As to Heaven, it corresponds to the Pagan Elysium, if it were only stripped of its holiness; as to hell, it is but the rude jargon of fanatics. Ere long, all the romances of Border chivalry, and the deeds of German robbers, will find a precedent in the Bible.—When these men die, who will sound the knell of wisdom.

2d. Christianity is to be tried by the Scriptures. No book but this professes to have been given by inspiration; at least, there is none that bears the acknowledged seals of a revelation from heaven. To compare the evidences of other systems with those of Christianity, would be to compare the light of a wandering star, with the settled splendour of ten thousand constellations. There can be no difficulty in determining what is taught in the Scriptures. If there be, the difficulty lies in our own ignorance, for which we are responsible. We admit, most cheerfully, the utility of creeds and confessions, but not that the full-length portraiture of Christianity is found in them, any more than that all the laws of the land are to be found in the index of the statute books.

If Christianity, then, be charged with being hos-

tile to science, the cultivation of reason, and the improvement of the mind, such a charge cannot be admitted. Indiscreet Christians, may concede that there is no connexion between Christianity and mental pursuits, or that religion and science should be kept separate; but the testimony of the Scriptures, and the history of the church, overturn the declaration. From the earliest ages have the Scriptures operated upon the human mind, rousing all its energies, and stirring up its latent strength. Their traditional facts have been scattered over the face of the world, which have formed the basis of much that has been displayed by human genius. The translations that have been made at different periods, into different languages, would, in themselves, constitute a mass of literature. An order of men have, in every age, been set apart, whose office is to investigate their meaning, and give out to the people, the fruits of their researches. They are a foundation, upon which innumerable volumes have been written. They send out fertility over all the region of oriental literature, like the secret stream that pervades some ample field of the greenest luxuriance.

It might be natural for men of piety to set a high value on the Scriptures, because they daily taste their sweetness, and draw from them as from a well-spring of life. But many, of every grade in literature, have considered them as the most invaluable record extant. Have they not been studied

from immemorial time, in the schools of the East, in the chambers of prophets, in the retreats of Rabbis, and in the cells of learned martyrs.

3d. The general establishment of Biblical instruction, throughout our churches, is to be considered as an evidence of the increasing prosperity of religion. There is no scheme worthy of more distinguished approbation, whether we view it in relation to the ministry, the pupils, or the mass of population that fill our churches on each successive Sabbath. But to commend this scheme, would be as much out of place, as to commend the operations of the American Bible Society. Let us rather abound in exhortations to press the system to the furthest possible extent, to comprehend within its circling influence, the young and old, even the man whose hairs are hoary with age. Then will all our churches be as the fruitful field, which the Lord our God hath blessed.

4th. The Scriptures should be habitually studied in our colleges and universities. The information they communicate, independent of the holy design for which they were given, would be sufficient to sanction the practice. In the gay anticipations indulged by youth, they betake themselves to every elegant attainment. But what if the displays of an infinite mind be forgotten. Go to the seats of learning in our land, and see how many of those are daily perusing the Scriptures, who are to be our future legislators, who are to fill all grades of pro-

fession, and all ranks in life. Soon are these students to stretch their influence over this vast continent, and to plant themselves on an elevation, from whence they will be seen by thousands. If their minds be imbued with Scriptural knowledge, wherever they wander over this chequered world, they will hear a voice saying, this is the way, walk ye in it. It is charming to see youth penetrating the recesses of occult science, or roving in the field which the imagination has spread before their footsteps; but it is more delightful to see them clustered over the Sacred Volume, and lifting the leaves, one by one, that hold the thoughts of that Being, who daily sustains the universe. Doubtless, a traveller of taste and piety, who should visit the universities of Cambridge and Oxford, would give way to many tender associations. We may well suppose that his mind would call up the shades of profound historians, of elegant classics, and of the mighty masters of the lyre, who have been educated within their cloistered gates. Would he not think of the successive throng that have gone thence, like wave impelling wave? But how much would it increase his veneration, to know, that there, for ages, the Holy Scriptures had been profoundly studied, their doctrines zealously unfolded, their precepts enforced, and their precious consolations supplied. This would surround all his associations with something like eternity.

5th. The study of the Scriptures is the leading

duty of the ministry. Set apart to the honourable office of interpreting the mind of God, an acquaintance with that mind, is indispensable to the right fulfilment of the duty. This is the most important qualification to be useful. That piety which is the effect of mere feeling, will quickly pass away. 'Tis but the effervescence of ruined nature; but that piety which has its foundation in the Scriptures, and is daily nourished by them, will last while time or eternity shall endure. A minister may excel in all science, but if deficient here, he is nothing but a tinkling cymbal. Whereas, men of the humblest intellect, with an unreserved devotedness of heart to the Scriptures, may far outstrip in usefulness, those who are commanding the applause of the world, who are listened to with delight from Sabbath to Sabbath, whose opinions are registered in the hearts of their people as oracular. Painful thought! that a minister may be the delight of his congregation, and yet may descend to his grave, and go up to his last account, without manifesting the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

There is a mere intellectual study of the Scriptures, that has an effect on the mind of the preacher, as injurious as the total disregard of the Scriptures. Taking up a set of opinions, and those opinions erroneous too, and then torturing the Scriptures to make them speak what they never intended to speak. A preacher who does this, may be likened

to the angler, who, continually missing the valuable productions of some ample lake, delights to torture his prey, from the effect of sheer disappointment. What, we ask, ought to be the reflections of such a man as Thomas Belsham, the reputed Sampson of Unitarianism? who has devoted a life-time to the intellectual study of the Scriptures, and, in the evening of his days, publishes a work, the object of which is to sap every fundamental principle of revealed truth. But Sampson has been shorn of his locks, for his intellectual feebleness has inflicted a deep wound on the unholy cause he meant to espouse.

But we turn to a striking example of the beneficial effects of studying the Scriptures, in Thomas Scott, once the humble rector of Aston Sandford. He stood on dangerous ground, even after serving at the altar. But the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, appeared, even to him, and he rose at the call, girding himself for a life of extraordinary usefulness. There have been minds more penetrating than his; the imagination of many has been far more vivid; his powers of eloquence were by no means great—but his judgment was clear, his research profound, his discrimination accurate, his views of the gospel extensive. He could not be crushed by external circumstances, because he habitually sought first the kingdom of God. When he entered into the vast fields of Scriptural truth, it was with a mind free from prejudice, and a heart that knew no

trepidation. Prepared to embrace the whole system of revealed truth, he looked intensely all around it, and bore away from the divine volume, richer fruits than ever grew on the banks of Eschchol. His humble rectory was a Bethel, and upon his lowly manse, might they who are daily charioted in splendour have looked down with envy. But how sublime was his death. Compare the dreariness of his last moments, as they might have been, in a mere intellectual investigation of the Scriptures, with the actual circumstances of his departure. As well might we compare the sun, setting amidst clouds, with every signal of a coming tempest, and the sun, setting in radiant glory, enlarging his orbit to the eye, that he may shed forth tints of exquisite light on hills and vales, and meadows crowned with herbage, and flocks that repose in the verdure, and silvery lakes, and over all the blended picture of an upland and lowland scenery.

In the study of the Scriptures, it is right that every collateral aid should be sought. The original languages of the Scriptures ought to be known, and relished by the student. Without this, it would be difficult to know the mind of the Spirit. It is desirable that this knowledge of languages should reach to a far greater extent than is common. The Scriptures, or parts of them, were early translated into languages, with which but few students of the present day have any acquaintance, and these translations might throw light on any apparent discre-

pancies, or their coincidence with other copies might prove very satisfactory. The maintenance of this, however, is perfectly consistent with an inflexible maintenance of the truth, that every other qualification is nugatory, without a heart that delights in holiness. The moment we wander from the feet of Jesus, that mighty master in Israel, that moment we stand on yielding ground. Who has not heard of men, who have searched every cell where a copy of the Scriptures was to be found, who have compared translation with translation, who have criticised every manuscript, and yet whose eye is too dim to read the capital letters—This is the true God, and eternal life? All this is as rational, as the actions of that man, who would ponder the history of some venerable castle, and every manuscript history that he peruses, tells him, that the castle is surrounded by a line of enchantment, which, if he crossed, he might see its valuable domains, and survey its strength. But he fails to do the very thing which the record unceasingly tells him to do. So soon as he comes near the line, he starts for fresh evidence that no such line exists. The supreme dignity of Jesus, is our high fortress. It may be assailed; but it will be as the assault of one who loved the wages of unrighteousness, and who was at last compelled to exclaim, I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners

of Moab. To all such students of the Scriptures, we say, Understandest thou what thou readest? and the most suitable reply would be, How can I, except some one guide me.—Search the Scriptures then; but let your principal motive be that of the text, because they testify of Jesus.

It certainly augurs well for the prosperity of religion in our favoured country, that it may be said generally of our preachers, that they are Scriptural preachers. There may be exceptions. Some delight in the terse and elegant exhibition, in the brief and comprehensive essay, in the start theatric, in the detection of human duty among the codes of Zoroaster or in the statutes of our blood-thirsty aborigines; who suffuse the holy records with the brilliancy of nature's light; who eulogize conscience as if it uttered the voice of a god and not of a man; who give us a gem of piety for which they have angled in the waves of the Ilyssus. But our divines, generally, where they are not learned, are Scriptural, and where they are learned, that learning is consecrated to the best ends. Burdened frequently with the thankless office of teaching or uniting rural cares with parochial labours, in many places slenderly supported by a population who have not intelligence to appreciate their worth, they may still be designated as the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof. Under all these embarrassing circumstances, their eulogy may still be read in the learning of those who preside on the bench of

justice, or in the eloquence that enlightens the senate house, or even in that profound political sagacity which more than once has sat down in the presidential chair of this great nation.

All human accomplishments, without a profound love of the Scriptures, in the fulfilment of the ministry, will end in disappointment. If we possessed the classic taste of Melancthon, after labouring for years, we should be brought to the same humiliating confession ascribed to him, of the feebleness of man. Can these accomplishments charm men into obedience to the revealed will of God; can they subdue the pride, and overturn the idolatry of the heart? Why then was it necessary for Paul to plant himself upon the Areopagus, or to send out upon Corinth the thunder of his rebuke, or glance a reproof at the doctrines of Epicurus? But the Spirit can do what human genius cannot do. He can break down the proud heart of man, whether it be the heart of sage or philosopher, bond or free, Barbarian, Greek or Jew, for the wind bloweth where it listeth.

6th. The influence of the Scriptures on society must be good. They contain no evil, and they enclose within their lids more truth than our philosophers can ponder in all their days. We are aware that some believe them to be inspired in the same sense that Homer was inspired, or Bacon, or Boyle, or Locke. But if these venerated worthies had

written such a book as the Bible, we should have gloried in their inspiration.

As read from Sabbath to Sabbath, the Scriptures produce much good—as expounded they produce good—as translated from language into language, as read in our families, as handed out by Bible societies, they produce vast good. It is not in the power of a finite mind to tell the good that may be done by a copy of the Scriptures, as it finds its way from house to house, and from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. Their practical influence on society may be seen by daily observation, by reconnoitring settlements where the gospel is planted, and where it is not planted. The same laws operate in different sections of our land, attended by the same sanctions. Where the gospel is completely triumphant, all law might be suspended; but where the gospel is not established, the law must transgress its righteous limits, if it would detect all iniquity. Is there no difference between some peaceful village that might be selected in Scotland or New England, and some village in our remote territories?—What would be the Sabbath day employments of the one, compared to the Sabbath day employments of the other?—Look on this picture, and then on that, and set over the intelligence and order of the one, in contrast with the ignorance, the wildness, and lawlessness of the other.

None can contend that the Bible is an injury to society, for even infidels have admitted that its

moral precepts bespeak wisdom and a profound acquaintance with the wants of men. But when we add to this the views they disclose of the holiness and majesty of God in the plan of redemption, their clear discoveries of the fall, and consequent ruin of our race, and the method they reveal of nearing the distance between the sinner and the glorious Jehovah, their value cannot be estimated.

No one would be willing to send us back to fierce druidical systems to find the words of eternal life, or to the Koran for peace of conscience. Or who would tell us to wash in the Ganges that we may be clean? Can any one believe that it is not in the power of the Bible to elevate degraded Africans to the rank of men, and to scatter light in their darkened and impoverished huts? It has done it. Can any one believe that it is not in the power of the Bible to break asunder the chain of the caste? We reply it has already made gaps in that chain, and it will eventually shiver all its links. Or that it cannot call in our Indians from their roving habits? It has done it, as when the horn is sounded to call in the dispersed company of huntsmen. The falsehood that our Indians are incapable of receiving the grace of God, has been refuted by demonstration. They have long been placed under the ban of infidelity. Persecuted and driven back, their line of population has become thinner and thinner, till Christianity stretched its rainbow, which has enclosed their forests, and their hunting grounds with-

in its ample arch. What, has not Christianity pierced the black and loathsome groves of druidical barbarism, and assuaged the torrent of human blood, and bade the groans of victims bound on the altars to cease? Has it not planted the rose of Sharon among the moors of Scotland, and around its habitations suspended upon craggy and almost inaccessible cliffs? Has it not reared in England ten thousand spires all pointing to the skies, which lend an air of moral richness to her landscapes? Has it not spread a charm over Geneva sweeter than her scenery, and gilded as her lake when the sun sets upon its waves? Such are thy triumphs, Oh blessed Jesus, thou son of the Most High.

But if the Scriptures have wrought such benignant effects already, what will they not accomplish when it shall be announced with truth that all their prophecies are fulfilled. We fear to enter upon the theme, lest imagination should blend something unholy with the wide spreading picture of beauty. But it is not in the power of the imagination to disclose what a God can reveal when his immutable word shall take its full effect upon the hearts and lives of men. What they have done shall be literally nothing compared with what they are destined to achieve. We may admire the integrity of Noah, the faith of Abraham, the meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, or the decision of Daniel, scattered through successive periods. We may admire the constancy of martyrs, or the intrepidity of men of

missionary spirit. But what if hundreds or thousands should rise in the same age with kindred spirit, to testify for Jesus that he is faithful. What if the church can furnish at any moment, for any enterprise, bands of holy warriors, leagued in that eternal friendship which holiness inspires.

Where is the heart that does not burn with desire at the prospect of some change being wrought for our race, a race that have been for nearly six thousand years at a measureless distance from their Maker. Has God cast off this world forever, or does he mean to take it again, after its temporary aberrations, into a renewed alliance with his general system. He means the latter, because he has given that to save the world, which is more than all worlds, namely, the blood of his only Son. He that spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things. Ten thousand worlds could he create in an instant, but what power in heaven, earth, or hell, shall ever create an uncreated Saviour. All evil shall then be banished from a world which has been filled with nothing but evil. This shall be done, not by the romantic notion of the perfectibility of man, which exists only in the voluptuous mental delirium of philosophers, but by applying to the moral condition of our species the plainest truths, by unceasingly urging the demands to repent and believe. Literature, indeed, has tried its utmost, it has reared its fences around human nature, but they have been incompetent to

stem the tide of abounding iniquity. Literature has covered nations with her productions, the arts have exhausted their ingenuity, and yet literature and the arts have promised no millennium to man. They never pointed the generations of Greece and Rome to a city that hath foundations eternal in the heavens.

But Christianity has boundless blessings to confer on our lost and guilty world—Let her open her treasury, and how rich will the earth become. What prospects of happiness, what scenes of bliss will be unrolled by that volume which testifies so largely of Jesus. When that volume shall find a dwelling place in every habitation, and a home in every heart, the earth shall then know that the developments of the Scriptures alone, could subdue our rebellious passions. The earth shall jar no longer in the chorus of the universe, and though once naked, and stripped, and blighted, and exiled, it shall be readorned at the hands of its Maker. That God who changes the naked aspect of the sky by leading in before the eye his thousand orbs, will make the earth every where to teem and glow with scenes of chastened light.

Finally, it is the personal duty of all men to search the Scriptures. Perhaps one object in lending an air of mysteriousness to some portions of the Scriptures was, that they might be deeply studied. A garden that lies all open may be quickly searched; but so fruitful are the Scriptures, that their very

fruitfulness may cast a shade over their pages. Enter in, and beneath every bower there are roses, every leaf teems with life, a star enlightens every thicket, and from the centre to the circumference the tree of life sends forth its fragrance and its shade. Without an entrance into this garden, the soul of man is poor, feeding on the fruits of finite minds, the wild heath of Pagan knowledge, or the open moors of fancy, or the ever withering herbage of genius.

Well might Hervey say when he lay contending with death—I have been fond of classic elegance, and of every thing new in our language, but could I begin to live again, I would read the Bible. Such was the experience of this holy man, and such is the experience, in the last feature of it, of every dying saint. Well might Locke say, Search the Scriptures; they have God for their author, and salvation for their end.

Having proceeded thus far in these discourses, which are most humbly directed to the glory of God, let me beseech the Divine blessing in the devout language of the Psalmist—"Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, establish thou the work of our hands. Yea the work of our hands establish thou it." Amen.

DISCOURSE III.

Obstacles to the Piety of Literary Men.

"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified—unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." 1 *Corinthians*, chap. i. 22, 23, 24.

In entering upon this discourse, we must declare our belief, that the obstacles to piety, in the minds of literary men, are not more numerous, than in the minds of other men. But all men are encumbered with temptations, arising from their peculiar pursuits in life, and literary men have obstacles to encounter connected with their habits of research. We disclaim all intention of holding them up as the implacable enemies of Christianity, or of insinuating that many have not embraced it in its purity. Such a representation, would be doing injustice to that system, the advancement of which, is the humble design of these discourses. Robert Boyle alone, would prove that Christianity may have its hum-

ble disciples among the learned, and where the system has not taken its intended effect upon the heart. Literary men are often distinguished by respectfulness of feeling towards the objects of religion. Still the apostle Paul encountered much opposition from philosophers, and in opposition to their systems he sometimes displays great strength of reasoning, and no contemptible powers of eloquence. Even at the present day we are met with certain objections to Christianity, which are reiterated, notwithstanding the able replies which have been given by able writers. Our design in this discourse, is

1st. To consider some of the obstacles to the piety of literary men, and

2d. To attempt the removal of these obstacles.

It is probable that by far the greater number of literary men are free from that opposition to the gospel which arises from a supposed defect in its evidences. The time has been when its proofs were violently impugned, but the age of infidelity is past. The Jew, in the days of the apostle, demanded a sign, and continues to demand it. Believing in a temporal Messiah, glorying in the miracles of Moses, seeking justification by the law, he looks with anxiety for the re-establishment of his nation among the vine covered hills of Palestine. But he looks in vain, for though the Jew may desire a fresh stock of miracles, we preach Christ crucified. The Greek sought after wisdom, but had it not been for obstacles of a moral nature,

he might have discovered in the gospel a wisdom sufficient to challenge the attention of the profoundest scholar. Whilst the Scriptures are filled with miracles properly attested, with prophecies fulfilled and fulfilling, with astonishing events, with sublimity and consistency, a system of precepts that outstrips every other system, literary men must revere the Scriptures. They cannot account the gospel foolishness in the same sense in which it was so accounted by Grecian philosophers who trembled for their influence, abounding as it did, with light superior to their own. But it was not the aim of the apostle so much to awaken an external regard to the gospel, as to make it the power of God and the wisdom of God to them that believe, whether they be Jews or Greeks.

But the opposition to the gospel, of which it is our design to treat, is such as arises from the effects which the system is calculated to produce in regulating the faith, in governing the heart, and directing the life. Whilst its evidences are admitted, some of its principles are opposed. Among these we notice—

1st. The fall of man. Opposition to this truth, if not openly expressed, is secretly maintained and perseveringly nurtured. It is the stately defiance of the heart that loves its own opinions, and arrays itself against the positive declarations of the Almighty, as well as all human experience and observation. The polemical writings of our own coun-

try could show that this truth has been substantially denied by men pretending to science. They have treated those who believe in it with ridicule, and have assailed the memory of Edwards with virulence. By many, this truth is discarded from their creed, it is permitted to escape from the memory, or to be lost from the contemplation of the mind. Where believed, it is supposed to contaminate the heart. It is not asserted that these sentiments are very openly expressed, but we prefer that men should avow their belief instead of keeping an obstinate silence, and maintaining a haughty and iron hearted determination not to favour us with one act of mental condescension, or one display of intellectual acumen. The sooner these persons make their whole system to appear, the better for their own conviction and the peace of the church. But literary men have reconnoitred Adam in a state of innocence, and after a philosophical inspection have declared that he has either handed down his innocence unimpaired, or that some casualty has taken place by which men become imitative transgressors. They have said that the page which records the fall is unworthy of belief. If this be not a fair exhibition of this frantic method of reasoning, then language ceases to be the picturing forth of our thoughts.

It may be asked, however, whether this doctrine is not opposed by the rude as well as the polished, by the ignorant as well as the learned? It is op-

posed by all who have not distinctly embraced it as a part of Revelation, and who have never uttered that prayer from the heart—God be merciful to me a sinner. But literature is too apt to lead us to systems which give an improper view of our moral condition. We frequently, though not universally, incline to the opinions of writers by whom we are charmed. Hence many would rather take lessons from Plato than from the Saviour; and yet the philosophy of the one never saved a Greek, whilst the awful denunciations of the other have convinced thousands of their fallen state.

Literature presents an endless variety to engage the mind, to distract the attention, and captivate the affections. Scarcely is one attainment made before another is diligently sought. That which is profound is investigated, and that which is elegant is coveted with avidity. We know indeed that there are men of Christianity, who can play innocently with the heathen mythology, who can look with admiration and compassion on that genius which has gilded its odious deities, and draw from this source a high illustration of the fall. But this is not its ordinary effect on the mind of the student. To many there is something repulsive in the fall, and something odious in those views of human nature which are grounded upon it.

2d. The doctrine of total depravity is in all probability obnoxious to men of highly cultivated taste. Revelation is here uncompromising in its statements. It not only acquaints us accurately with

the history of the fall, but it tells us distinctly its consequences, and announces the present moral condition of the species. In that fall was comprehended, as one of its awful consequences, the total and entire depravity of every descendant of Adam. Men are blind to the glory of God, the nature of his government, the holiness of his law, the requirements of the gospel, the awfulness of death, and the certainty of judgment. This depravity is total in every individual, and universal as it respects our race. Wherever the footsteps of men have pressed round the world, they have left the deep impression of depravity. The Zones do continually gird in innumerable dwellers of every hue of transgression, but all partaking in the blackness of one general defection, of one grand conspiracy. But how does this statement accord with the taste of men devoted to literature.

Literature leads the mind unceasingly to contemplate character as formed upon a high human model. There is often implanted upon the heart, a profound desire of imitation. An impression is frequently received, that a belief in total depravity is incompatible with a sustained and lofty admiration of these manifold traits of intellectual splendour. Literature is always disclosing those mental beauties which elevate, rather than depress human nature in our estimation. We are not apt to enter into deep speculations upon the total ruin of man, whilst feasting on those elegancies of the mind, by

which we are held in delighted captivity. But let it be remembered, that this depravity has its seat not so much in the mind as in the heart.

3d. The moral law. In this law there is a wonderful exhibition of the Divine Majesty. This is evident from that selection of awful circumstances under which it was delivered. It was glorious to kindle the bush into a flame, and at the same time to give an indestructibility to that burning bush. It was glorious to unfold the heavens, and despatch angels whose lips were touched by the finger of the Almighty, and it was glorious to send the Lord Jesus Christ to consecrate the earth by planting upon it his meek and hallowed footsteps. But terror and an unbending annunciation of solemn claims, a calling upon a guilty world to attend to Him who rideth gloriously in the sky, form the principal features of that display which was made on Mount Sinai. That law is to bind all men. It is to run parallel with all ages of the world. There is no emancipation from its restraints. It binds the lawless heart and arraigns every guilty conscience. It forbids all to wander for a moment from a fixed, supreme, and undivided attachment to Him who is the strength of every being. It can countenance no pursuit that supplants its requirements, and it perpetually fixes the seal of condemnation upon every idolater.

4th. The Scriptures speak of the helplessness of man. Every member of the human family is op-

pressed by an inability to comply with the demands of the gospel; not an inability which excuses or extenuates, but an inability in which is included the essence of our guilt. Against this representation it is pleaded, that if the gospel be addressed to those who are utterly helpless, the gospel can have no meaning. But the proper description of this helplessness is one great means of giving efficacy to the gospel. We can conceive of no method of defeating all the ends of the gospel, so efficacious, as to represent human nature in a light different from that in which it is contemplated by the Holy Scriptures.

Any truth must carry along with it something repulsive that has a tendency to humble the pride of man, by revealing the helplessness of the heart. The opinion is perseveringly upheld by all unregenerate men, that they are able to work their way through all that moral darkness which envelopes their moral powers, to the light of the divine favour. Hence so many thousands habitually delay till the hour of death a preparation for eternity. Then, often for the first time, the awful discovery rushes in upon them, that it is too late; whilst vast multitudes expire without the remotest conviction of their moral helplessness.

5th. Closely connected with these views, the regeneration of the heart fills a conspicuous place. To man in the darkness of nature, there is something abhorrent in the thought of being disturbed. Call

to the Indian while muttering to the stars, or the idolater of any clime whilst prostrate before his gods, and he may turn away, but it will be to rend you. The doctrine of regeneration, if once established, aims a decisive blow at all the supposed virtue of men, as commending us to the Divine favour. But it is a commonly received opinion, that the heart, in its unrenewed state, is susceptible of improvement, and that the moral powers can be trained to an astonishing proportion of moral excellence. Education has indeed accomplished wonders. But literature cannot work that change upon the heart which fixes it high in a purity unknown to it before. It cannot expel its evils and train its powers to that stature of holiness required in the Scriptures. If it could, the history of literature would furnish instances without number of such effects being wrought by its influence. Whereas all its records have never displayed the individual who has ascribed the change to such a source. Though mere literary men have seen the evils of the world, they have never been able to correct them; though they have bewailed the miseries of the heart, they have never directed their steps towards any other source of consolation than broken cisterns can supply.

6th. The doctrine of the atonement by the vicarious sufferings of Jesus Christ, deserves a most serious consideration. This takes away all power of atonement as residing in ourselves, and lays on ano-

ther the immense task of our salvation. Thick and impenetrable were those barriers which stood in the way of our recovery. Who shall ascend the hill of atonement? was an important inquiry. Why was it necessary that that hill should be stained with such precious blood? If mercy be a divine attribute, why could not that attribute display itself without recourse to so awful an expedient? Why throw an air of such inflexible severity around the divine government? No inquiries are more easily answered by the heart that has assiduously sought after the light of this atonement and joyfully responded to the calls of the gospel. But they are not so easily resolved by the heart that never knew its own poverty, and that has never mourned over its apostacy.

7th. The deity of the Saviour. This is a mystery which transcends the powers of human reason. A great part of the glory of Revelation consists in its distinct and audible annunciations of this important truth. It is hard for the mind replenished with information, and daily accustomed to reasoning, to stoop to the belief of a mystery which baffles its powers. Here we may see the entire propriety of subordinating the mind to its legitimate objects of research. The moment it steps over the line which the Creator has marked out as its limit, that moment it becomes bewildered. But let none suppose us to mean that the deity of our Saviour is incapable of being proved by the most

solid and irrefragable argument. The history and termination of every controversy in relation to this subject, would tell differently from such a statement. But this argument must be invariably conducted by a reference to the authority and supreme decisions of revelation. What is the testimony of the Scriptures, is the leading, and ought to be the ultimate question. But literature has spent its last efforts in attempting to sap this truth and shake to pieces this foundation of the Christian system. It has searched a multitude of manuscripts, and exulted at the finding of every suspicious text, every interpolated passage, and every unimportant discrepancy. Had the same labour been employed in displaying the deity of Jesus, far better fruits would have been the result. But instead of this, unsanctified literature has regaled itself in the pleasing delirium, that this holy truth does not make a part of divine revelation.

8th. The eternity of future punishment. We approach this part of Revelation with no small portion of solemn awe, and yet terrific as it may seem, it is pure benevolence which moved the Almighty to write it out in such burning letters on the sacred page. It was placed there that men might be moved with fear, if by no higher motive, to escape the great day of the wrath of the Lamb. But the human heart revolts at the disclosure, for who among the children of men believes it with that intensity

of faith which we ought to put forth upon a truth so tremendous.

But there is no necessity that we should go over the wide range of theological science, to find truths to which the sons of men are opposed. There is a discordance in the Christian system with human corruption, but that corruption it is intended to subdue. We have exhibited this brief summary, and they are only a few of those truths which have called out the opposition of literary men. In these principles, our faith must be regulated by an authoritative revelation. When we settle our creed, let us dismiss our books of literature, the systems of the schools, the dictates of an ever erring philosophy, the instructions of classical writers, the soft pictures of poetry, and the smooth annunciations of sentimentalism. With manly courage let us take up the will of the Most High, ever anxious to abide its decisions.

But this system also, claims the power of regulating the practice and ordering the conversation. With holy mandates does it lay upon us the supreme love of our Maker, and this love is to be manifested by an unceasing course of obedience. The heart must come down to the lowliness of our Redeemer. It would be comparatively easy to frame our lives in accordance with the life of some philosopher, whose image Biography had imprinted upon our hearts, but who shall constantly mark the footsteps of the Saviour. Who shall constantly be like

him in meekness? Men of the most elevated piety, the most unblemished life, bear but an imperfect resemblance to this divine Saviour, else would they be oftener seen in every retreat of human misery. We should oftener see them climbing the mountain and gaining an entrance to the habitation that crowns its cliffs, cheerfully drinking of its torrent, and feeding on the fruits which Providence has hung on its summits.

Christian morality demands the employment of our time, in the manner the best calculated to secure the glory of God, the good of men, and our own personal advancement in the divine life. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. It allows no hour to be bestowed on pursuits that are useless, but makes every passing minute to sound its monition—that time is short. It fixes on our possessions a mark of consecration. It sets up a righteous claim to all the wealth that burdens the world. The cattle on a thousand hills, the flocks of a thousand vales, are the Lord's. To Him the sea owes its tribute of gems, the Spring its buds, the Summer its flowers, and the Autumn its ripened fruitage. But if God will not permit us to gather the wealth of the world, to be consecrated to our selfish purposes, he cannot permit men to make that which concerns the mind, the object of idolatry. Intellectual attainments must be set apart to the divine glory, for any other view would infallibly lead us to atheism. It is generally supposed that no

claim is so well founded, as that claim which men attempt to establish to the powers of the mind. Let a man rise into notice from obscurity, he has done it by the force of his mind; let a man bring to a close some important literary work, he has accomplished it by a peculiar talent for research—or a work of genius, the merit is all attributed to the writer. The inspiration of the Almighty, that giveth understanding, is forgotten.

The morality of the Scriptures involves a supreme taste for holiness, a constant communion with heaven, a struggling with corruption, a hatred of all sin, the performance of every social duty. Men of cultivated taste, in common with the rest of mankind, are anxious to cast off the restraints of this morality.

We are to attempt, in the second place, a removal of these obstacles. We feel the importance of the subject and cannot but put forth an humble supplication, that we may be sustained in the attempt by divine assistance. The truths which have been sketched, are truths, to which has been given the denomination of Evangelical. According to some statements made of Christianity, in the literature of the day, no prejudice against it exists. But this statement calls for some defence. It is maintained, then, that this view is confirmed by the Scriptures. Let their plain and obvious meaning be taken; let their sense be diligently sought and collected. The putting of the Scriptures to the torture, argues as

little for Christian temper, as for the attainments of the scholar. Suppose that discrepancies were found in the writings of Plato, they would not lead us to doubt the general meaning of his philosophy, or, on account of certain discrepancies, we would not hesitate in gathering the general complexion of the Iliad or Odyssey. We claim for the Bible, just what we claim for every other book. Suppose, then, a man were to sit down to examine the Scriptures, with a view of settling a certain classification of truths, would the foregoing principles make a part of that classification? We argue that they ought, and where a love of truth prevailed, they certainly must appear. They have found a place in every system that has ever been formed, except in certain scanty and superficial creeds, drawn up by those who profess hostility to all creeds. An opinion extensively prevails, that an entire disagreement of views has taken place among the different branches of the church. But in the foregoing principles, all Christians agree. The Bible is the property of no peculiar sect. It is a common standard of opinion, and a common fountain of information. The Pagan and Mohammedan, must acknowledge that these truths are registered in the Sacred Volume. They have formed the ground work of much spirited opposition from infidelity, which, with all its moral deviation has intelligence enough to discover that they are enrolled upon the inspired page. The reducing the Bible to a collection of oriental

figures cannot destroy these truths, for what is the tendency of all those figures and allegories which appear in it? Let this question be answered, and the light reflected on these principles will be transparent, clear as the milky way, formed by the radiance of invisible constellations.

What, then, is the duty of every individual, who discovers that these truths are distinctly recorded in the Scriptures? Certainly, not to cherish against them a deep-rooted and implacable hostility. Certainly, not to revile them, and pronounce God to be unjust in giving such a revelation. Language like this may suit the noisy declaimer, or it may serve a purpose, in exciting popular passions, but it comes very ungracefully from the enlightened pupil of science. Such an individual should feel an imperative and immediate obligation to investigate, whether the Scriptures be an inspired book. But let their inspiration be once established, and how quickly should every doubt be shaken, every cloud dissipated, and every barrier to faith overturned. We may be morally certain, under these circumstances, that the wisest purposes are answered, by depositing these truths in the Holy records, that no other truths were so well adapted to our condition. Though they may be repulsive to the taste, once realized, they convey sweetness to the soul, as the bitterness of the bud may be forgotten in the luxuriance and fragrance of the flower.

That the Scriptures are inspired, is certain as

any kind of evidence can make it, all sources of information have conspired to prove their inspiration, while no source of evidence yet explored, has ever yielded an opposing testimony. But the authenticity and inspiration of the Bible, would lead into discussion, far too ample for the limits of this discourse.

But whilst the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, we must express our unwavering preference for a system, conspicuously involving the cross and the supreme dignity of Him who hung upon it for the redemption of mankind. Here we seem to tread in fields, consecrated by the footsteps of men, who, ages ago, contended for the faith delivered to the saints. We wander back to the world, before the flood, and commune with patriarchs, as they lift their altars and bind upon them the choicest of their folds. Our affections glow in the burnt offerings of the second father of mankind. We assemble with the innumerable crowds of Israel in their appointed festivals. We hold with apostles the unity of the faith in the bond of peace. We brighten the links of that well fastened chain, which connects the hearts of the pious in all lands. We glory in the coronation of martyrs. If asked how these men attained such measures of holiness, it is answered—by receiving the Scriptures with child-like simplicity, and taking from them the height of that intellectual and moral stature to which they desired to attain. But if reason be con-

sulted, reason gives to these sentiments its approbation. By reason, we mean all the intellectual powers. It is a common impression, that these principles may indeed be found in the Scriptures, but that reason forbids us to believe them, or reduce them to practice. But our regret would be deep, as it certainly would be well founded, could we believe that all the reason in the world was lodged with those who oppose this system. Such a statement would be against all evidence arising from facts. What does the history of controversy decide, if it decide not that these truths are capable of proof, from the exercise of the intellectual powers? We do not say that they can be established so as to answer the design for which they were revealed, because the application of them to the heart, must take place by the agency of that spirit, whose office it is to display them to man.

It is generally admitted, that one of the highest offices to which our reason can be called, is to judge of the nature of those annunciations which are made in the Scriptures. It is an act of wonderful condescension on the part of our Creator, to permit his will to be brought before a reason which he has given, as before a judgment seat. Yet it seems connected with the necessity of circumstances, that man should be gifted with this privilege. But what is the appropriate office of reason in this inquiry? Having investigated the origin of the Scriptures, and found their origin to be divine, it is the duty

of reason to submit, to take out of them the scope of its faith, and the range of human practice. But suppose that the mind, after investigation, decide against the inspiration of the Scriptures—What follows? Why, the inquiry must then be started, as to the circumstances under which the investigation was instituted—what amount of pride or prejudice entered into it, and how far reason was perverted and turned from the purpose to which the Creator originally designed it?

But are the abettors of rational Christianity, more profound in research, more acute in discrimination, than they who have advocated a different system? Have they forgotten by whom other views than their own have been espoused? Not to go back to the days of Augustine, Edwards will furnish an illustration of extravagance in their claims. It is unnecessary to inquire, whether the generation in which he lived, did justice to his merits. But if there be any value in posthumous renown, he is receiving an enviable share. He was deficient in imagination; and probably his writings would have been more useful, had he been possessed of certain minor accomplishments. But, notwithstanding this defect, Boyle was not a brighter link between angels and men.

When a man of such lofty endowments, applies his whole mind to the investigation of the Scriptures, it becomes a matter of some importance, to know what were his discoveries. The value of his

testimony should be enhanced by incidental circumstances. Did he give up, for the most part, other sources of knowledge, availing himself, at the same time, of every secondary aid, in his studies? Was he willing to sacrifice his preconceived opinions, when overthrown by his investigations? Did he push his opinions further than the point at which he maintained them, when commencing his inquiries? These questions may all be satisfactorily answered; and will not the researches of such a man, stand in bar of the researches of men, who carry into their investigations a lordly independence of opinion?

In opposition to this, many declare that they investigate the Scriptures, and believe them, so far as they coincide with the light they possess, or so far as they may be consistent with the analogy of their faith. But is this the utmost limit to which you can go? Then you set bounds to the wisdom of God, and erect barriers, beyond which you dare this Holy Being to pass! What language is this for a creature—I have wisdom, superior to infinite wisdom, and can better prescribe plans for the government of the world, and the good of the universe. And this, too, is declared in defiance of manifold proofs, that we fill but a diminutive place in the scale of being, and in defiance of multiplied evidences, that the God who has governed the universe so long, is still capable of unravelling all its intricacies, and of pouring out light on its remotest

corners, over which he has cast the transient shade of his providence, or the thick impenetrable cloud of his decrees. But these sentiments are confirmed by literature. It is not possible to make its researches bear against the distinctive truths of Christianity. It is true, that it has not been so ample in its offerings to Christianity, as the friends of the latter system might desire, but occasional gleanings will show, that Christianity has sent some portion of richness and fertility into literature. We discover hints of revealed truth in the writings of antiquity. The creation of the world, the innocence of man, the abundance and peacefulness of this golden age, the fall, the deluge, with all its attendant circumstances, receive confirmation from this source. One of the Eclogues of Virgil, might almost have been written on Mount Zion, amid all the solemn associations which the place might have inspired. Literature has been used by irreverent witlings, to cast contempt on the Christian system. But it was not so used by Milton, the greatest of modern names.

We have said, however, that literature gives some confirmation to the foregoing views. Who has ever gone into deep historical research, without discovering that the fall of man is receiving continual illustration. Let our race be judged by the record of history. Christianity has no cause to fear an investigation into the remotest times. What have our race been doing since the time at which

revelation settles the foundation of the world? Have we ever read of a holy man, except he were made so by that system of mercy, which was commensurate with the Fall? Where is the nook of the world that has never known the inroads of corruption? Where is the country whose fields have not drunk the blood of the people whom it nourished? Where is the desert that has not heard the yell of the savage—the sound of the warwhoop—the piercing cry of murder—the shriek of death? Where is the promontory or rock of the ocean, that has not sheltered the lawless buccaneer? War, carnage, and bloodshed, have been the amusements of the world, and are now themes which give gaiety to description, and move swiftly the sportive pens of historians. The very admiration which we feel at these bloody deeds, is proof of corruption, deep as Hell.

> War is a game, which, were their subjects wise,
> Kings would not play at.

But if man be totally depraved when viewed in the light of history, how comes it that history records such noble actions? It would indeed be astonishing, if the record of six thousand years could furnish no instances of magnanimity. But their infrequency is one cause of our admiration. In the performance of these actions, history often traces the motives by which they were done, and these motives will not bear inspection. Neither is it denied, in speaking

of the fallen and depraved condition of man, that his mind is still full of vigour. Had not this been its situation, such profound ingenuity in the invention of evil, would never have been developed. But because the mind may be strung to occasional boldness, it does not prove that there is not a total apathy in our concerns with our Maker, or because the heart melts into occasional tenderness to our fellow men, it is nothing but what incidentally takes place in the caves of banditti, where the standard of entire lawlessness is planted. If man be not fallen, we ask infidelity to show any scenes of bliss in the world, worthy the Creator. We ask not for those which exist in fiction, because the seeking fictitious scenes, results from a destitution of those that are real. Alas! even the pictures of ancient manners, of soft tranquillity and rural simplicity, are pictures animated by the footsteps of the murderer, and defiled by guilt, treachery and falsehood.

There is an accurate description of human nature in the Scriptures, and there alone. All research confirms it. Look into heathen systems, and tell us if man be not totally depraved; whether poetry would have sung of gods that could not hear. Whether the sublime mind of Homer, would not have broken to pieces the unholy systems of darkness, by which he was enthralled. Whether, in the mass of heathen literature, sparkling with beauties, some solitary mind would not have owned the source, from whence it was furnished. Whether

philosophy would not have offered a tribute to the infinitely wise God, who capacitated it for research. Tell me whether the traveller would not have led us to some spot which corruption had never entered, or would not the voyager have unfurled his sail, in sight of some happy shore, where man was not a transgressor. But from this source, the helplessness of man receives confirmation, and the consequent necessity of laying our help on another, by faith. It is not left to revelation alone, to speak of altars, sacrifices, and the binding of victims. In revelation, these things have a distinctness, which they have not in other records of ancient manners. But over the world they had a meaning, and a meaning, borrowed, in part, from revelation. In all ages, men have felt appalled by a sense of guilt, a dread of danger, a terror of commotions in the heavens or the earth, a fear of invisible beings, the anger of deities, a startling horror of the grave. Altars have been reared in the groves—they have blazed in the vallies, and lifted their incense to the mountain tops. Rewards and punishments have been the sanctions of religion, though the force of these has always been obstructed, by the abounding corruptions of our race.

Our daily observation will convince us, that the foregoing truths have a foundation in fact. If the Scriptural delineation of man be correct, do facts establish its correctness? Is man corrupt? Is he fallen? Is he morally helpless? Does he need

an atonement? are questions to which we may gain an easy answer. Nothing more is needed to reason out the total depravity of men, than a view of the present state of mankind. This will prove that some grand moral catastrophe has befallen our world, that has severed the people who live in it from their Maker. Here we behold the hideous spectacle of millions of creatures, living in a world which they created not, and yet every one of those millions, failing in integrity before God. We hear of no effort being made by one to return to his allegiance to the King of kings, except it be done by the instrumentality of that revelation, which records the fall and its penal consequences. In revolted provinces, after being long severed from their king, clans may renew their vows of fidelity; but who shall tell the name of the individual, on the roll of earth's population, who hastily sought pardon, unmoved, from on high? We see all these millions, hastening, without an emotion of gratitude, to the feast which Divine Providence spreads for them round the world

From morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve.

But suppose that the voice of prayer and the song of gratitude, are suspended in the abodes of poverty. Are they heard in the halls of opulence, where, we should suppose, the affections would ring every hour in a merry peal of gratitude?

Should we not suppose that all these beings would

keep in sight the end of their days, that they ought to hold in perpetual, and very near remembrance, the moment that was to place them before the eternal God for judgment? Should we not suppose, that all the way from infancy to old age, the glory of God would sometimes fill the heart, burn on the tongue, and glow on the lips? Should we not hear of some mighty confluence of population, rolling onward, and mingling together, to know why they were thus exiled by the King of the universe; how his anger might be appeased, and his favour regained? But how different the aspect of the world? how unholy its pursuits? how selfish does each daily revolution find its tribes? Even though the lamb of atonement has been slain, the people will not come to the sacrifice. But what is the acknowledged state of man's moral powers? None will deny that they are surrounded by infirmity, oppressed by feebleness, and easily overcome by temptation. All men, though they go no further, will acknowledge blemishes and defects. With a view of showing our weakness, inspiration has placed in the Scriptures the record of the failings of holy men. But our moral powers gain strength, just in proportion to the fidelity with which we cling to the atonement. For when we were without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly.

Moralists have written largely on the powers of conscience, and their theories have been various. Some have believed that the conscience was not

injured by the fall; that whilst every other faculty was impaired, this faculty maintained its purity. But who would set himself seriously to refute such an opinion? Would the Scriptures speak of the purification of a faculty entirely innocent? How much more shall the blood of Christ purge the conscience from dead works. And they, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one. It would be strange, that an innocent power should be the seat of conviction. Conscience has been called the vicegerent of God, in the soul of man. But it is a fallen vicegerent, like the powers over which it attempts to take control. This would be like setting a captive, in Algiers, over his fellow captives, without one superior power or privilege to their own. Education may make it more sensitive, but the gospel alone has power to regenerate it, and even after its regeneration, they who feel its energy have often reason to confess—

We know the right, but still the wrong pursue.

When we look among the nations and discover how conscience operates, we may see its unholy tendency. As it influenced the apostle Paul before his conversion, or the multitudes who took part in the crucifixion of our Saviour, or upon those who have mocked, around the triumphal cars of the martyrs. In all the history of idolatry, we may trace its pollution; and in Christian countries, what is it but a vile instrument of vice, except where the gos-

pel has quickened it. This view of conscience, lays the basis upon which we may repent and believe in the atoning blood of our Saviour.

We add, that there is a kind of universal consent to these truths. This would not, indeed, prove their truth, but it is a confirmatory evidence. All men having some traditional notion about the being of a God, the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments, seems to set those truths in a clearer light. All men, then, have some general views of the fall, of guilt, and the necessity of an atonement; but these views are perfectly consistent with a depravity, total and remediless, except by the gospel. We may see the force of these principles, in the ten thousand idols, whose wrath is deprecated, and whose anger is daily appeased by blood. We may see them in pagodas, mosques, and minarets—or in consecrated groves, rivers and altars—in synagogues and temples, in barbarous countries, and in polished kingdoms. Let the Jew, therefore, require a sign, and the Greek seek after wisdom—We preach Christ crucified, for what has not the cross effected? We allude not to the days of chivalry, and the deeds of superstitious warriors on the fields of Palestine, when it rose for a while over the crescent. But this is a day of modern chivalry—We speak this with reverence—Greenlanders, Esquimaux, Hottentots, Bushmen, have felt the impression. The trumpet of the gospel will wax louder and louder, until all earth's

darkened coasts and continents shall hear and obey the sound.

We draw this discourse to a close, under a deep conviction, that we have done nothing like justice to the text. It is gratefully acknowledged, that literature has given its testimony to Christianity; but we enter a solemn protest, against making Christianity subordinate to literature.

Is there not a necessity, that, instead of attempts to overthrow the Scriptures, that the Scriptures should become the wisdom of God, and the power of God to the hearts of men. The time is coming, when philosophy will avail us nothing—when eloquence will be mute, and literature but a gilded dream. When a pathway is to be discovered across the Jordan of death, the harp of poetry will be unstrung, unless it send forth a cheering sound of Him who is the resurrection and the life. Amen.

DISCOURSE IV.

Christianity Miscellaneously applied.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ."—*Colossians*, ii. 8.

It is not unlawful to use the text as a basis upon which to apply Christianity miscellaneously. In such an application it will be necessary in the outset to glance at certain systems of education. There is an universal impression of the importance of the rising race. Even infidels feel it: therefore systems of infidelity are sometimes so artfully framed as to catch the impassioned mind of youth. Many romantic dreams have thus bewildered the opening mind and debarred it from an unreserved application of its powers to all the useful purposes of life.

Nothing perhaps has ever given rise to so many visionary schemes as the subject of education. The press teems with books, intended to reform the mistaken views of men. Men of piety have been betrayed into errors as well as men of an opposite character. Many speculate for the mere sake of speculation, who having put together their disjoint-

ed thoughts, are frequently astonished that more benignant effects do not arise from their immature systems.

It cannot be denied that some of these systems partake more largely of the rudiments of the world, than the rudiments of Christ. Of these we are cautioned by the text to beware. In accordance with this caution, we admonish the reader against the fancy of perfectibility being wrought in man by education; any writer who even distantly hints at such a result is an unsafe guide. Whether the sentiment come from Godwin or New Lanark it is unsound. It betrays a pitiable ignorance of the radical principles of human nature.

Let us also guard against those rudiments of education, which tend towards producing a deeper selfishness than that with which we were born. Selfishness has a dominion in the heart of man, sufficiently strong by nature. Almost every attempt to break down its power is unavailing, but how much more unavailing would all efforts prove, if selfishness be nourished by the daily lessons of education. For this reason emulation is dangerous. It fosters unholy passions and frequently a wild ambition. It generates self-sufficiency and is too apt to extinguish every noble and honourable feeling.

But are not some systems of education recommended by many excellent and practical rules. So far as they go, they are worthy perhaps of general reception, yet they may fail in the most important

part of education. There may possibly be a total absence of the religion of Jesus Christ. This may be said of many systems, even though there be in them a passing allusion to the gospel, and an occasional reference to the Holy Scriptures as a book, whose literary information is far too important to be overlooked.

By educating youth on Christian principles, the most happy consequences would certainly result. The youthful mind is plastic and adapted to early impressions. By pouring down the light of heaven on the expanding faculties and shedding there the fragrance of scriptural truth, by exhibiting those models of character, which are disclosed in the sacred volume, but especially the unblemished character of our Saviour, by extirpating a criminal selfishness, and inculcating a holy disinterestedness, we should be furnished with far better fruits than any that have yet been gathered out of the rudiments of a mere worldly education, whilst the vast majority of parents are making worldly calculations for their children, laying schemes for their aggrandizement, disclosing before them every day their own unholy devotedness to earthly scenes, sending them to places of education which chime in the best with their own miserably concerted views. Christian parents should be exerting a contrary influence in behalf of their offspring. By seeking for them supremely the kingdom of God, by leading them to the Holy Scriptures as the purest fountain of wisdom, by fixing on their hearts a sense of the divine majesty,

by showing them the fallen state of the world, by urging them onward to the relief of human wo, they might with the Divine blessing secure for them unfailing consolations, render them useful, and when such parents go down to their graves, they might leave their children as plants in the courts of the house of the Lord. The parent who would educate a child without a supreme reference to its eternal relations, deserves the reproach of casting away an immortal creature into entire uselessness.

But the text has an especial reference to certain philosophical systems, which are not conformed to the genius of Christianity. To multitudes the bare mention of philosophy is repulsive. By wild enthusiasts it has been denounced as hostile to religion. But the eulogium of the poet is more appropriate.

> How charming is Divine philosophy!
> Not harsh, not crabbed as dull fools suppose,
> But musical as is Apollo's lute.

It was indeed remote from the inspired apostle to cast contempt on a philosophy regulated by the restraints of religion. In the highest sense he was himself a lover of wisdom. He had sufficient sagacity to have enrolled his name in any of the ancient schools, but his attachments were transferred to a far different school in which the wisdom of God is taught in a mystery.

That a prejudice exists against the class of men denominated philosophers, must be admitted; nei-

ther is it to be wondered at, when we review the sentiments of many who aspire to the envied distinction. Their views are too refined, too much involved in cold calculation, and tending too little to a practical bearing on the wants and woes of men. But let the philosopher subdue his mind to that teachableness which is ornamental to a creature, let him circumscribe his discoveries by legitimate bounds, or let him throw the warm colouring of piety over every region invaded by his penetration, and this prejudice will cease. All ages will conspire to revere the name and the virtues of Boyle.

An incompatibility is said to exist between philosophy and the Scriptures. This is asserted by the veteran chieftains of infidelity down to the stripling just entering the lists of his adventurous hostility to Christianity. Philosophy! abused name! The language of the Scriptures is not philosophical, it is said; it is true then that the sacred writers were not versed in the discoveries of Newton. Their inspiration led them to contemplate vastly weightier things; things that concerned the moral standing of a world before its Maker. They were ignorant of the population of the planets. They had not instruments to look in among them and take the dimensions of their cities or their hamlets. But these were trifles compared to the message with which they were entrusted. Yet in whom shall we place the most confidence. In him, who

coolly starts and successfully terminates his inquiries about the heavenly bodies; or in Him who comes forth and lifting a voice of authority to the heavens, says;—Stand still thou sun on Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon. Who would bind down such a man to the niceties of modern discovery or to the technicalities of artificial language.

Philosophy has asked, whence came the waters to drown the earth? Is not the world older than it is represented to be by the Hebrew historian? Might not this goodly frame have existed from eternity, or might it not have been produced by a fortuitous concurrence of atoms? What necessity can there be, that Jesus Christ should honour by his incarnation, a world so small in dimensions? But admitting the existence of an all wise Creator, has he not established a regular system of laws, with which he never interferes? are not miracles contrary to our experience and observation?

It is certainly needless to animadvert on these interrogatories. Dark must be that understanding which can satisfy itself with such meagre and scanty systems. That mind must be literally bewildered, which could seriously dethrone an infinite Creator, or account for lofty mountains and lovely vales, and the millions of glorious objects with which our world is stocked, by a fortuitous concurrence of atoms. But though this be an exploded doctrine, wherein do philosophers differ from those who held it, whose aim in all their re-

searches is to keep God out of view. Though we may pity philosophers in their feeble attempts to comprehend the Divine perfections before the introduction of Christianity, we should suppose after its introduction, that philosophy would always return from its researches, richly laden with the fruits of meekness; we should suppose that upon every investigation it would be brought more and more into contiguity with the infinite Spirit who presides over the system of nature. We should suppose that every opening beauty would so expand and transport the soul as to lead it further and further into the halls of the universe; every where filled with the bright pictures of wisdom. Let the mind of the philosopher work its way into the caverns of the ocean, he should gather thence a tribute for his Maker; or into the grottoes of the earth, he should rear a transparent altar to the Most High; or if he ascend to the stars, he should approach them as so many burning jewels in the crown of the King of the universe. The researches of the philosopher should be analogous to the researches of the redeemed in future felicity. In their wide range among the works of God, how is every power subdued, how does each swelling and distant landscape elevate the soul; how does every stream of creative wisdom detain the beholder till he sweetly muse on the fountain. Such a state of the soul we would contrast a moment with the philosophy of some, in their naked and frequently

extorted acknowledgment of the Divine existence, which resembles more the confession of a criminal, than the reverential feelings of a child. Franklin is ranked among philosophers; we should like to be in possession of language in which to convey our veneration for him. But we have here to do only with his religious opinions; and about them there is a hesitancy, a doubtfulness, a half-way scepticism, a carping at religious men, a levity which detract from his merits even as a philosopher. Is this philosophy? Then banish it from the earth, if it make us to trifle about solemn realities, and sport with our eternal being. Our country has been unhappy in some of its philosophic men upon the great point of Christianity; and whilst in some respects we hold them up to the imitation of our youth, in others we would warn American youth to beware of their pernicious example and their deceitful philosophy.

But there may be an entire lawlessness in philosophy, even where the existence of God is acknowledged. It is alleged that God exists and has put into motion a regular system of laws by which he governs the universe; but these laws are to remain forever undisturbed. In this theory it will be readily perceived that there is no allowance made for well attested miracles. These laws were certainly disturbed by the confusion of tongues, the plagues of Egypt, the cleaving of rivers, the production of

manna, bringing water out of the rock, the resurrection of the dead, and in countless other instances. But this doctrine, which goes to undermine a special Providence, takes away all the warmth and tenderness of Christian faith, and reduces this faith into a heartless calculation.

The whole revelation is alive with views of a Providence, not a Providence, which overthrows, except on extraordinary occasions, the established order of the world, but is constantly moving all the springs of the machinery to the fulfilment of its purposes. Neither is there any concession in this theory, that he who constituted these laws, had a special reference in their constitution to the wants of all those who are his children by faith in his Son; and without such admissions we might address the upholders of this system in the language of the prophet,—Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. Or we might rank the abettors of this system among those who inquire, Where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the foundations of the world. But they forget that he is coming in every movement of his providence, in the secret approach of death, in each revolution of the heavenly bodies, in the silent though omnipotent lapse of time.

The providence which God exercises over the

world is a constant creation. He is untired in his watchfulness, and never weary in sustaining his works. He sends blessings on the most secret corner of nature; millions are daily fed by his bounty, who lie all night in the hollow of his hand, and touched by that soft hand, they awake to the brilliancy of each successive day. God is seen alike in the serene or awful movements of nature, in the meekest flower or the mildest star, when the still small voice of the rivulet is heard, or when the ocean lashes the sounding shore; when the sea is crowded with canvas, or when the lonely bark plies its way to some distant haven.

> Blow then ye winds, without his high behest,
> Ye shall not in the mountain pine
> Disturb the sparrow's nest.—Kirke White.

But should it be asked if we would so blend philosophy and theology, as to make every philosopher a theologian, it is replied in the negative. But if every philosopher were a Christian, a man of reverence for his God, and a profound believer in the Holy Scriptures, then philosophy would assume its proper place, as subordinate to Christianity, and as the handmaid of religion. We need not then wonder that an inspired apostle, anxious to lay every thing under contribution to the Christian system, enforced upon the Colossians the exhortation in the text.

It may be proper in this connexion to speak a word of metaphysical systems. The sentiment is

not unusual, that researches of this nature are forbidden in the Scriptures. But the Scriptures have laid a foundation for a vast deal of metaphysical investigation. Because this branch of knowledge is perverted, its perversion forms no solid argument against it. Where it is not made a light independent of Revelation, it is presumed that no jealousy ought to exist, lest it should supplant Revelation. The writings of some metaphysicians have not only been tinctured, but suffused all over with scepticism; but there has been a mixture of good and evil in all the departments of science.

Among the opinions which claim an alliance with this branch, is that of the materiality of the soul, its temporary extinction in the grave, till the revivification of the body. To this opinion may be opposed the declarations:—This day shalt thou be with me in paradise. I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

The Scriptures are likewise opposed to any system which would overthrow the free agency of man. By free agency is understood, a power in man to act consistently with the dictates of his nature. There is indeed an important inquiry dependent on this view of free agency, and that is, whether this nature in consistency with which man has the power to act, be a nature, innocent or guilty, holy or sinful, partially or totally depraved. We

believe that the nature of man is totally depraved, nor has the atonement of Christ wrought any change in that depravity. This would interfere with the economy of redemption; for the work of awakening sinners, and applying the atonement, is always ascribed to the Spirit. Man is still dead in trespasses. It would divide the glory of our recovery between man, and that Spirit, whose acts are always the acts of a sovereign. It would render nugatory all the scriptural representations of that unholiness which is resident in the human will. But to say that man has not voluntarily taken upon himself the fall and all its consequences, is unscriptural.

There is another opinion which makes God the author of sin. This opinion is charged upon some divines in our country, who indignantly cast it away, as making a part of their system. These divines, we believe, worship God in the beauty of holiness. We then summarily remark, that this opinion, if held at all, is carrying metaphysical science too far, being an attempt to cover ground which has not been covered by revelation.

Metaphysics have stripped the material world of its materiality, and the spiritual world of its spirituality; but resigning to others the task of combating these sentiments, we remark that this science, regulated by an enlightened understanding and a devout heart, may lead the mind into beautiful paths which wind upward to the supreme Source of

wisdom and holiness. Nor will it, thus regulated, interfere with the practical duties of the ministry. There are few men who have been safer guides to the inquiring than Edwards, better skilled in all the perplexities of conscience, more intimately acquainted with the sources of consolation to the penitent, or more tenderly alive to moral excellence, from the moral excellence of Jehovah down to the babe in Christ.

In passing over this varied field, it may be well to pause and ask, whether our systems of rhetoric may be tried by the standard of Christianity. There is in eloquence something so delightful, and such astonishing effects have arisen from it, that our youth are put upon its possession without a single qualification. We cannot be inimical to it, because its finest models are assuredly found in the Scriptures. When the apostle Paul speaks disparagingly of eloquence, he is not speaking of a manly eloquence, such as became the ambassador of the Most High, but of a gaudy and tinselled eloquence, the effect of refined rhetorical art.

Systems of rhetoric generally appear defective in important moral points. The teachers of eloquence are too much engrossed with the advantages, which it is capable of producing to its possessor. Youth are incited to excel in it from the admiration which it arouses in the popular mind. All this awakens a supreme selfishness which is opposed to eloquence. It is taught to youth, that if ever they excel, devo-

tion to the art must supplant every other consideration. From this arises the inevitable consequence, that eloquence is not cultivated, for the good that may be done by its instrumentality, or for the usefulness of which it may be productive, but from motives personal and selfish. We seriously doubt whether under such instructions, an individual will ever arise who can be called an eloquent man. Our judgment will easily determine, whether precepts like the following will ever fill the world with orators. Eloquence must be your idol. You must dream of nothing else. You must adore the patriots of antiquity, even him who rose refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate. Your country must be all in all. Yet with such wretched precepts, and we will add such wretched preceptors, are many of our youth preparing to play their part in the drama of life.

Another defect in systems of rhetoric is found in the circumstance that nearly the same set of rules is given in relation to the eloquence of the pulpit. It is remarked by a distinguished writer* on rhetoric, that pulpit eloquence was not known till many ages after eloquence became a system; and we may look upon it with something of the same feelings, with which we regard the discovery of America. It is true that a large class of new and glorious objects have been revealed, which demand a correspondent eloquence. Some of the rules of

* John Q. Adams, President of the United States.

rhetoric may be consistent with fidelity in the preacher, but the arts of rhetoric are entirely inconsistent. The affected modesty, the acquired hesitancy, the downcast look, the trembling hand, the suppressed voice, will not avail the pulpit orator. And then for the success of the message, his dependence must be fixed on a higher source than the enticing words of man's wisdom. Without other qualifications, his lamentation will be—I have laboured in vain and spent my strength for nought.—The pulpit orator should be a holy man, covered all over with the meekness of the Saviour, panting for the good of men, touched by the misery of the world, feeling the shortness of time, a perfect image of lowliness, simplicity, and tenderness. Such a man will be sufficiently eloquent.

There are systems of criticism which ought not to be overlooked in this enumeration. The time has been when criticism was almost unnecessary. But our emotions are not so vivid, nor our perception so quick under the present mass of literature, as if we had lived in days anterior to the art of printing. It has now become necessary to erect literary tribunals, before which works of taste and science must be tried. It is sometimes the fact, however, that public opinion goes before the decision of these tribunals, and it is apt to awaken a smile when one of these literary journals is issued like a death warrant in search of some work that has made its way to every habitation. But it is not

our intention to depreciate the art of criticism. The power of judgment is exercised every day. Discrimination and selection are displayed by men, in their most ordinary transactions. The savage is not without taste. The rudest nations have some sense of beauty. In agriculture, gardening, the adjustment of their habitations, mankind have a general perception of that which is pleasing to the eye.

There is no danger that criticism, however malignant, will ever dispossess genius of its rewards. It may cast a temporary cloud on a well earned reputation. But can a cloud always shroud the sun. Criticism cannot eventually affect merit, though it may keep out of view worthless publications. It may follow hard upon opinions that sap the order of society, or the peace of the church. It may expose ignorance and counteract misrepresentation.

It is more important, however, to notice the tenor of religious sentiment indulged by our critics. Where journals of this kind are conducted without discrimination, the effects are highly injurious. The works of the drama or the novel, are taken up solely on the ground of their literary merits; and a total disjunction is produced between literature, moral sentiments, and religious opinions. Admiration is indiscriminately lavished upon any thing or every thing that bears the marks of taste. Infidels and Christians are reduced to a level, whilst the sceptic goes on in his literary career unalarmed by the reasonings of the master spirits of the age.

Novelists profane the name of God, or travellers impugn the veracity of the Scriptures, and criticism may prove unfaithful to its duty.

But what endangers most of all the boasted infallibility of these tribunals, is the conflict of their sentiments upon the merits of the same works. Opposing decrees forever destroyed the infallibility of the papal see. Critics lean too much to their prejudices even in their most impartial efforts. We can discover theological prejudices very clearly, in discussing the merits of works which bear on the missionary enterprise. It is scarcely possible that these writers can believe in the superiority of paganism to Christianity. If so, why should they stand between the heathen and the light of heaven. All such attempts are to be regarded as a bold effort to contravene that command of the great God our Saviour—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"—and wo to him, who shall do any thing to prevent the execution of this command.

We here direct a momentary attention to ethical systems. Is it not correct to trace human duty by the light of reason and philosophy? Certainly: but not to set up human reason as a supreme source of information, nor to make philosophy an exclusive standard of human action. There is no necessity that we should yield the fertility of revelation to the barrenness of abstract reasoning. If we contrast the authority of the Bible with our ethical

systems, and mark the rapidity with which its precepts succeed each other in the record of human duty; we cannot hesitate in our preference. If ethical systems be taught in subordination to these discoveries, opposition to them must cease. But their weakness and unprofitableness ought to be exhibited when they are rested on as a dependance. For though they may polish the mind, give an amiable exterior, and impart much that is desirable, yet they cannot displace the only true foundation which God hath laid in Zion.

An impression has gone abroad that some men have an aversion to moral precepts, because they delight to dwell on the leading and peculiar sentiments of the Scriptures. But among these men we may find the purest and most searching system of morals; our most flourishing congregations are presided over by evangelical men. Yet ought not ministers of this description seriously to examine, whether they be as faithful in enforcing the preceptive parts of the Bible, as in developing its grand and fundamental doctrines? Should not love, meekness, humility, tenderness to the poor, compassion to the ignorant, truthfulness, honesty in every transaction, profane swearing, the appropriation of property to benevolent purposes, demand a large portion of ministerial exhortation? We ask not for a passing allusion to subjects of this class, but for laborious discussions. The ethics of the Scriptures properly exhibited can throw into

obscurity all other systems. By such discourses ministerial usefulness may be enlarged and many dangerous delusions done away. We do injustice to the apostle Paul, by construing his declarations of attachment to the cross of Christ in such a way, as to suppose that he did not insist largely on the morals of the New Testament. These remarks are submitted with diffidence to those at whose feet the writer would sit down with deep humility, and in submitting them he must again avow not only his admiration of the men, but of the principles by which they are accomplishing such a change upon the aspect of society. We conclude this discourse. It may be asked why we should press the claims of Christianity so extensively, as to give it a cognizance over every department of human knowledge? Does not this argue an hostility to noble pursuits? To this it is replied, that we feel the supreme importance of Christianity. Every consideration that can be drawn from the shortness of time, the frailty of life, or the solemnities of our future being, should be urged on the conscience. Literary men ought to feel an argument taken from the flight of time. Every minute is valuable in their estimation, as it may add some fresh attainment to the mind. They go back in their researches, thousands of years, and converse with those who long since have met with an overthrow. The trump of fame figured in the world. But these mighty men cannot break their slumbers. They sleep each in

his lowly sepulchre; undistinguished perhaps by the memorials of a nation's gratitude. There is none to pluck the thistle from their graves. Where are the distinguished men of Babylon, Persepolis, Athens and Rome. Let us muse on human greatness; and let a sense of the frailty of human pursuits, rush resistlessly on the heart.

If there be scenes of eternal felicity beyond the grave, they should be kept bright to the view. Should there not be an habitual preparedness to exchange time for eternity? Is it improper to approach literary men with the solemn annunciation of the life to come? Astonishing infatuation! that this truth does not weigh heavily on the conscience of every rational being that roves along the pathway of life; that the pathway will quickly end, and all beyond is dread uncertainty to those who believe not the words of eternal life. When therefore literary men are preparing the rudiments of the world, and setting them off to captivate the thousands already given to folly, we are overwhelmed with amazement.

It might be an interesting inquiry to suppose that Christianity were advanced to its full ascendancy and entire dominion over all the pursuits of literary men. Suppose that the harp never sounded but to tell of its excellence; that every orator bowed to its influence; that the imagination in all its wanderings kept an eye on its purity; would there be less imagination, less genius, less taste than now

belongs to the earth? There could not be. Men sigh for the restoration of that bliss which they have wantonly squandered by their apostacy. The heavens would still teem with light, and the earth would reflect it back to its source. The rivers would be as resplendent, the mountains would still lift their inspiring summits, and the valleys would put on as deep a verdure; an infinitely nobler tribute would go up to the Creator than that which now ascends from this guilty and ruined world.

How sweetly did Milton sing of Eden, from which angels were always ascending and descending; at the evening hour their footsteps were heard, all night their harps echoed in the vales, or softly rung on the hills. Blessed intercourse! lost for awhile, but it shall be restored with increasing fulness in the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven. Amen.

DISCOURSE V.

The Relation of Christianity to Polite Literature.

"For all the Athenians and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing."—*Acts* xvii. 21.

ATHENS was a refined and polished city of Greece. Philosophy was there abundantly cultivated. Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, drew pupils thither continually. The walks of the Lyceum, the shades of the Academy, the waves of the Ilyssus, are forever associated with our classical recollections. The arts deposited every thing select in sculpture and painting. Architecture lifted its massy temples, and altars were reared to heathen gods. Eloquence was cultivated by its inhabitants—music poured forth its inspiring strain, and dramatic representations were sought for by giddy multitudes. The Assembly of the Areopagus here announced its decisions, and the

people met in the forum, to deliberate on public affairs.

In his unwearied rounds of itinerancy, the apostle Paul came into this splendid city. Skilful in debate, prompt in reply, versed, to some good degree at least, in philosophical systems, intrepid and fearless, he announced from Mars Hill, Jesus and the resurrection. Here was a field of action becoming so exalted an apostle. Had he not been such an apostle, some wild uncultured spot of Greece, would better have become his exertions in the cause of his Master. But notwithstanding all the boasted cultivation of Athens, its inhabitants are charged, in the text, with a prominent blemish in their mental constitution. An idle curiosity, fickleness of taste, a thirst for novelty, and the consequent misapplication of time, are the distinct features of this mental delinquency. The crowd of Athenians might have excelled in that which was elegant, but not in that which was solid; in that which was superficial, but not in that which was profound. They might have cultivated that which was new, to the exclusion of many things of more importance; but antiquity gave way to novelty. A new painting might have been gazed upon with admiration, whilst the Acropolis might have held far superior pieces—or a new production in statuary, might have drawn a crowd, whilst their master-piece was forgotten—or an ode, or ballad, recently composed, might have been preferred to the writings of Homer.

We have no correct standard, by which to try the intellectual attainments of the Athenians. It is probable, however, that the people imbibed, in some measure, the reigning taste for literature, as the soldiery may catch the martial fire of their leaders. But Athens was not a scene of unbroken enchantment. The spirit of Paul melted within him, when he beheld the city wholly given to idolatry. And where now is its intellectual, moral, or commercial greatness? Alas! the rude arm of the Goth has long since been applied to overturn its statuary, the plume of the ferocious Turk has waved on the Areopagus, its schools of philosophy are broken up, its bards no longer delight the listening throng—death has dispersed its popular assemblies, and the busy multitudes have finished their eager inquiries and responses, about that which is new.

We intend no violence to the text, by applying it to our present subject of discussion, namely, the relation of Christianity to works of taste. Neither is the text intended as a reflection on polite and elegant literature. The injustice of such a suspicion, will be evinced in the sequel of this discourse. We present—

1st. A brief view of elegant literature.

2d. The aspect in which Christianity regards this species of literature.

3d. We supply some cautions and guards.

By elegant literature, we mean all that literature which addresses itself to a delicate imagination

and a cultivated taste. Elegant literature implies that there is something choice and rare in productions which belong to this classification. The human mind learned, at an early period, to distinguish between that which was grave, and that which was playful—that which had to do with the profound reasoning powers, and that which has to do with the fancy. The imagination has ever been an active faculty, and notwithstanding the real evils by which man is beset, it has fancied a multitude of scenes that have never been invaded by evil, or haunted by death. It has so wrought among things temporal, that we have forgotten to what kind of a world we belong. No one, compelled to take his views of our planet, as it has been exhibited through the medium of the imagination, would ever suppose that it was a theatre upon which rebellion against its Creator had been developing for ages—that it was the birth place of the deepest machinations, and that not one of earth's unnumbered millions was just what he ought to be. The imagination has been picturing away ever since the fall, and so far from finishing, it accumulates every day a fresh stock of materials, or works into complex and untried forms materials that are old. Every age, and every land, has had its imaginative men. The influence of the fancy is seen in Persian tales and Arabian poetry, in the song of the Swiss and the strain of the Highlander, in the polished lines of the educated bard, or the bold, unadorned eloquence

of the American Indian, expressive of his unsubdued passions and romantic achievements.

In this classification, then, we place all works of the mind, directed to the imagination, through the medium of poetry—the novel, all sentimental productions, the drama, the book of travels, tastefully written, the biography of those who have cultivated polite literature, periodical works, embracing essays on life and manners. In the same connexion, it may not be improper to notice the arts of painting, music, sculpture, and architecture.

In prosecuting these discourses, it is important to ascertain the light in which Christianity looks upon this kind of literature. It is a most captivating literature, pursued by numbers, read and admired by immense multitudes. We are deeply aware of the delicacy of the task which has been undertaken. But we shall not abate any thing of the large and rigorous demands of Christianity, or fail to award a candid tribute, to that which is the source of so much intellectual pleasure, which is scattering so many flowers over the thorny path of life, and suspending so many beautiful wreaths on the dark and hideous wilderness of the world. We remark, then, in the first place, that Christianity exercises the power of selection among these pursuits of literature. The drama cannot be pressed into her service, but has done a vast deal to defeat her influence. We take this branch as it is, not what it might become. But we are by no means sanguine,

that a revolution in the literature of the drama, would be popular. It may be tried; but the present age of the world would receive with unbounded jealousy, every attempted change upon those appeals which the drama is constantly making to the corrupt propensities of men. Would the crowded theatre give up that licentious pleasure, which they derive from scenic exhibitions, from those multitudinous addresses to the passions, to listen to the utterance of moral precepts and weighty maxims, or for a descant on the shortness of time, and the vanity of all human pursuits?

Abandoning, then, all hope of a reformation in the drama, we feel constrained to place it under the ban of Christianity. The reformation demanded would be too radical to be allowed by the admirers of the tragic and the comic muse. But is the drama, abstractly considered, to be opposed, or only the accompaniments which give it interest? To this it is replied, that if the sentiments be just, they might as well be accommodated to action as not; but certainly not the licentious action of our theatres. In tragedy, there must be plots and counterplots, the plan must be involved, there is frequently an utterance of the language of prevarication and falsehood, and the whole closes with some shocking catastrophe. The comedy that succeeds, exterminates every good impression which might have been produced by lofty or benevolent sentiments, and the heart which has been regaled by the exhibitions of

an evening, sinks down into listlessness, until its exhausted powers are summoned to another spectacle of human degradation. The tear is shed by the delighted spectator; but does it fall in the hut of real misery, or is it expended on pieces of fancy, set off by all that artifice can invent. If the theatre be a place for the inculcation of morals, why, it is asked, are not our cities reformed? Why are not the crowds entranced by the exhibition, dispersed with the light of the morning into every lane of the city, where the sick man lies in anguish, or where the prisoner heaves his chains in hopeless despair? But the benevolence of the theatre is utterly at variance with the benevolence of the gospel. That the drama may convey noble and affecting sentiments, cannot be questioned. Some have supposed that the book of Job, and the song of Solomon, were dramatic compositions. There is here, however, a failure of evidence. Milman has successfully appropriated this species of composition to the service of religion. He has pourtrayed the courage and constancy of Christian martyrs, with a pencil warmed at the flames in which the noble choir were consumed. But where this writer has one admirer, Shakspeare can boast a hundred; and yet few men have ever wrought more mischief among our fallen species, than this boasted child of nature. The open attacks of infidelity can be easily parried. There is polemical skill in the church, quite equal to the task of stripping off the armour of any adven-

turous knight who essays from the camp of infidelity to attack her bulwarks. But who shall parry the sly attacks made on all the restraints of religion through the medium of the passions? Who shall counter-work the intricate plot that saps the principles of deluded thousands? What advocate of morality will be sufficiently bold to step behind the scenes, and drop an antidote into the cup of death, which is there in busy preparation for the pleasure-seeking multitude? Who has the moral power to let fall the curtain, which hides from breathless expectation, the victim, ripening in the development of the play, for the feigned dagger of the assassin? Who shall undertake to close the representation, as some favourite mimic is opening fresh sources of amusement to thousands, who ought to be weeping bitterly at their infinite distance from their Maker?

It is equally certain, that Christianity must look with disapprobation upon much that passes in the world under the name of fiction. The drama deals in fiction, and in incidents embellished by the imagination. But the novel and romance are less injurious, not because the imagination is not put into equal exercise, but purely from adventitious circumstances. The object of the novelist is to throw over life deceitful colours—to heighten enjoyments which the world possesses not—to absorb the attention in the destinies of imaginary characters—to give alluring traits to men of suspicious principles—to

paint the respective qualities of heroes and heroines, and develope a train of incidents founded in falsehood. Old age, that ought to be gathering additional tranquillity for its last earthly hour, is warmed into a remembrance, though not a penitent remembrance, of youthful follies. The thoughtless and inexperienced are pushed on into romantic extravagance. The holy Sabbath and the midnight hour, are frequently devoted to the perusal, and of course to the composition of novels. The bell that calls thousands to places of worship, where the wellsprings of life are opened, has not power to charm away those who are engrossed with a tale of imaginary distress. The positive duties, and the diversified relations of life, are undervalued. High mental accomplishments are cheerfully sacrificed to the impulse of a feverish curiosity, that aspires to nothing loftier than to know the winding up of scenes that a restive fancy has created.

But with regard to the numerous productions of this class, which are current in the world, there is little disagreement in opinion. Their warmest admirers admit their injurious tendency. There are some, however, whose incidents and characters are chiefly historical, that call for more serious consideration. We approach again a distinguished writer in this field of the imagination, which he has cultivated with assiduous care. It is hard, indeed, to read these compositions, be charmed with them, and then not speak of them affectionately. When

we consider, too, that the labours of this writer have been highly useful in stopping the voluptuous demand for common-place fictions, by the marked superiority of his own, we feel no common respect for talents so exalted, a genius so fruitful in resources, for descriptive powers so unrivalled. It would be no daring achievement, to hunt down the soft sentimentalism of our every day writers, but when we wind our feeble horn amidst some distant forest, say the forest of Ettrick, we feel the antiquity of its shades, the novelty of the scene, and a conscious ignorance whither to direct our steps. But the standard of religion laid down by this writer, is a standard always false or insufficient. Born in a country blessed with the light of the reformation, nurtured amidst ecclesiastical connexions which have been a signal blessing to Scotland, which have crowned her mountains with churches and filled her vales with faithful pastors, we should have expected from him a more accurate discrimination between truth and error.

He has thrown around a Jewess the charm of inflexible constancy in a false system of religion—false, as rejecting Christianity, but, in connexion with it, a glorious system of truth. He has chilled every moral feeling in his description of the reformed preachers. He has rent the Scriptures to pieces, and scattered them far and wide over the pages of romance. He has taken the name of the Lord his God in vain, and the Lord will not hold him guilt-

less. He has attempted to pourtray piety, but it is a piety weak, credulous, and ridiculous. He has left on the mind of his reader an improper view of the rigour of Knox, to whom Scotland is more indebted than to all her regal line. He has almost placed the ruins of abbeys and monasteries in a scale against the blessings of the reformation. As well might we take up a lamentation over the destruction of feudal castles, when the liberties of thousands have been established on their ruins, or over Indian fortifications in our own country, when millions are spreading themselves over the face of our happy land, rich in the blessings of freedom, literature, and religion.

But some novels are devoted to religion. To inculcate its principles is their leading design. This new species of composition is to be guarded with caution, and watched over with no small portion of jealousy. Instead of leading our minds to the Scriptures, they may supplant them in our daily reading. The young may take out of them the scope of their Christianity. They may operate as an authority to professed novel-writers—though we admit the highly useful labours of Hannah More in this department.

2d. Christianity approves of the remaining branches of literature in this specification. It cannot be asked, however, that she should surrender all guardianship over productions of this class. We have already spoken of the poetry, which is every

where visible on the face of the Old Testament. Though we have lost a knowledge of the Hebrew measure, there is still something in the complexion of poetry which immediately betrays itself to the reader. Jebb, in his Sacred Literature, has shown that there is much in the New Testament belonging to the same class of composition. We may learn from this, not to hold in disdain any branch of knowledge, which has been so remarkably appropriated to the service of religion. Christians may, unconsciously, do an injury to the cause they love, by holding in contempt the efforts of the imagination. How often is the hymn, abounding in defects, and confused in its meaning, preferred to the chaste and pious effusion of the fancy.

In the poetry that has been generally admired, there is doubtless much that is worthy of condemnation, but there is much worthy of perpetual preservation. Moral sentiments have been tenderly expressed, the vanity of the world set forth, and the emptiness of its pleasures displayed. At the same time, by many writers, there has been a miserable exemplification of their moral sentiments, in their lives. It is remarked by a distinguished writer,* that the powers of wit, and profligacy of morals, manly literature, and childish improvidence, elegance of speech, and roughness of manners, strength of imagination, and absurdity of principle, have been tempered together in too many of the sons of

* Rev. W. Jones.

Parnassus. In more modern efforts of poetry, there is the same mixture of good and evil. But it gives us pleasure to remark, that the present age is originating a new school in this art, who are anxious to redeem it from the unholy purposes to which it has been so long devoted.*

Religion does not oppose itself to works of taste. We accompany the traveller through the whole of his journey, or go with the voyager round the world. This we can do, as well on a winter evening as in a year, without incurring the perils to which they are exposed. The heart of the enlightened Christian warms with gratitude to those who have provided such sources of innocent mental gratification. Independent of this gratification, instruction is often to be taken from productions of this character. They cast light on the Scriptures, lead us to admire the wonderful works of God on the ocean and the land, and make us familiar with distant scenery. The same remarks will apply to the biography of this department, to the light and elegant essay, and the whole circle of periodical literature, whose object is to enlighten and instruct the student.

3d. There is an innocence in some productions of this class which Christians ought to treat with tenderness. A censorious temper is not a temper becoming the disciple of Jesus. The pride of opinion, the haughtiness of the understanding,

* In this school we are happy to rank our countryman, W. B. Tappan.

may be as effectually put forth in a determined rejection of the elegancies of literature as in any other way. But can any enlightened Christian withhold his admiration from the Minstrel of Beattie or the Telemachus of Fenelon? These writers have yielded important services to Christianity, but not in those works which address the imagination; and if a writer wishes to render such services, he had better perhaps, as a general rule, fix on some other department than the imagination. But who can doubt the piety of Fenelon? Religion shed over his soul a deep tincture of her own simplicity and meekness. Fettered by the restraints of a bigoted system, he has taught the bright lesson of tolerance to all ages. Encumbered with useless rites, he has shown that religion consists in the pure love of our Maker. The number of those who have lived in our world is not large, whose character has been a more delightful reflection of the image of Jesus.

In the same way, the essays which have been published at different times, may be considered as an innocent kind of literature. It is true we rejoice at the serious papers of Addison; and have read them again and again with increasing relish. Still we cannot coincide in the opinion, that the broad principles of religion ought to enter into compositions of this nature. This would defeat the object of such literature. Light and elegant essays are not intended to be systems of theology, but we

freely grant that the principles of religion ought ever to be treated with reverence, and delicately interwoven even with papers of this character. We cannot therefore entirely accord with a powerful essayist, who appears to propose a test of this kind, whereby to judge of the Christianity of Johnson; namely, the emotion of surprise that would have been produced by his reading to his literary associates, certain essays on some of the peculiar doctrines and precepts of Christianity. The taste of Christians may become too fastidious, and the prejudices of polished minds thereby become awakened. If we be told that in all the papers of the Rambler there is nothing directed to Christian experience, we reply that there is nothing directed to it in all the range of classical literature, or in all the demonstrations of mathematical science.

The Rambler, however, has as good morality as the Sermons of Blair, and better than the philosophy of Paley. In all the moral systems that have ever been published, there is nothing of the character alluded to by Christians. Neither should we expect in every thing to meet with a system of Christian doctrine and experience. It is manifest that if Dennie, who is indeed the American Addison, had discussed in his Lay Preacher the topics generally discussed in our pulpits, the Lay Preacher would have gone without readers.

4thly. Christianity encourages the Fine Arts. By this we mean, that the Christian system is not

opposed to the ornamental pursuits of life, provided that with the cultivation of those pursuits there is mingled a supreme regard to its authority. In branches of this kind there is something that deeply engrossess the mind and absorbs attention. But this cannot be a valid objection to the Fine Arts, unless it be an objection to every other human pursuit. Some Christians treat with disrespect these elegant brancites of human attainment. Such ought to remember, that the God whom they serve is the author of all that beauty which appears in the natural world, and a taste for the Fine Arts is but a reflection upon the human mind from the transparent mirror of nature. But shall all that is lovely and elegant in the pilgrimage of life, be devoted to the service of vice. Then will vice darken our world with clouds of increasing thickness. But led on by religion, the Fine Arts have done much to carry forth her influence on the hearts of men. They embellish life, expand the social affections, and knit more firmly the links of friendship.

But let us consult the record on this point, and then the question will be at rest. It is evident that in the erection of the tabernacle, that God inspired the men who were engaged in its construction. The architecture of the temple was doubtless magnificent. An art which in all its orders has been devoted to the decoration of heathen temples, was here appropriated to the service of the dreadful Jehovah. This temple often resounded with

his praise. Music lent its lofty influence to deepen the devotion of the thousands of Israel that came up from all parts of the land. On the journey to Jerusalem, it is probable that songs were indited, celebrating the Divine goodness, as the thirsty groups gathered themselves around the wells. Every kind of instrumental music was brought into the temple, though this is not mentioned with any view to the controversy respecting the introduction of such music into our churches.

The art of painting may either vitiate the taste and corrupt the mind, or it may ennoble human nature. The pencil may be employed either upon that which purifies, or that which pollutes the heart. Historical incidents of a lofty character may be sketched. The landscape of rocks and rivers, of forests and meadows, may be displayed, or works of art may be exhibited to the eye of the beholder, showing the ingenuity of man.

It is in the power of the painter to transmit important information, and to make us acquainted to an extent with the manners and customs of nations. A piece of painting will sometimes convey more definite information than a page in history, and a gallery of portraits more than a folio volume.

Sacred subjects have frequently been brought beneath the pencil. Every sublime event, and every beautiful occurrence in the Scriptures, has been selected by the artist. It is his province to find an entrance into the profound of human passions; and

when he represents the crucifixion of our Saviour in a moving manner, he only does what the preacher attempts to do on each succeeding Sabbath. Whether it be morally right to reduce these high and holy subjects beneath the power of the pencil, has been made a question. It is alleged that the person and countenance of our Saviour have no where been mentioned by the Evangelists. But in reply, it may be urged, that he who would exercise faith in Jesus, must inevitably exercise his imagination. We admit, however, that if the pencil be withheld from any sacred personage, Jesus, our Divine and adorable Saviour, is that personage. We close our remarks by expressing a hope, that the arts of painting and engraving may never be worse employed than in attempts to promote the kingdom of our Redeemer.

5thly. Christianity demands purity in all the elegant productions of the mind and in all the works of the pencil. A large measure of evil may enter the mind through the medium of the imagination. This avenue should be vigilantly guarded. When drawing out the ever varying and imperishable resources of this faculty, the temptation to impurity may sometimes be almost overwhelming. A man of genius may be influenced to retain incidents which are improper to be mentioned, or whole pictures, because they display the skill of the painter.

Immense and aggravated evil may be effected by a want of sanctity in the imagination of the writer

How many works of real merit have been tarnished by unpardonable blemishes. We must turn over whole pages, or bring a blush on the cheek of modesty, or distil a secret poison on the hearts of the inexperienced. By such writers it should be remembered, that the walks of elegant literature are frequented by thousands. They may be compared to the glades of literature, where numbers stray who have no disposition to pierce its thickets or plunge into its wilderness.

In the same way the works of the pencil lie all open. They are naked and exposed to the most careless beholder. The eye ranges round in search of something on which to fix itself, and if purity fill the foreground, we are safe in the midst of our pleasure. Let these words be always engraven on the palms of our hands,—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

6thly. Elegant literature may promote the cause of Christianity. It is in its power to do much positive good. No kind of literature has so winning an influence over the hearts of men. Notwithstanding its lamentable defects and need of reformation, were it not for its influence, mankind would be more barbarian than they are. But we look forward with confidence to the time when a reformation shall be wrought, when the excellencies of Christianity shall be continually spread out upon its pages, when her beauties shall sparkle in every conflagration of genius. Delight-

ful period, when her urns shall always be open to receive the tribute of wreaths woven in the garden of genius, and richer gems than the lakes and fountains and waterfalls of poetry ever yielded. Is this romantic? It cannot be. Is there not a time in store when God will be all in all in a world he has made, demanding the glory of every gift he has bestowed, and every accomplishment which his beneficence has scattered round among the imaginative men that feast upon his works?

Having examined the light in which elegant literature is regarded by Christianity, the discourse will be drawn to a close by supplying a few cautions.

1st. We are to guard against too great love for novelty. Though the Athenians were always admiring what was new, it was a defective trait in their character. But the love of novelty has an astonishing influence at the present day. It is not said that the love of it, to a limited extent, may not be beneficial in its operation. There are some who carry their antipathy to what is new so far, as to be willing to stop the press. Such are always admiring the wisdom of our ancestors and loudly commending experience. However narrow the circle of their ancestral information, it must be applauded, just because it is ancestral. It is needless to say that this is a strained and hyperbolical view of our ancestors. And then to stop the press, would be like commanding the sun to

stand still, or rather to shine no more. In the one case, the moral darkness would be as great as the natural darkness in the other. Our Creator has given an ample variety in his works.

> Various that the mind of desultory man,
> Studious of change, and pleas'd with novelty,
> May be indulged.

But among all his works there is infixed a wonderful unity, as if he had intended to teach us a lesson of steadfastness in all our varied pursuits. An excessive love of variety in literature is most injurious upon the education of the mind, the peace of the conscience, and all habits of settled piety. When a play, a novel, or a poem is eagerly sought because it is new, the mind freely relinquishes profitable pursuits to become possessed of its scanty information. This is a disease of the taste. It is too apt to prevail in the gay and sportive period of life, but sometimes increases with years and deepens with age. It is sufficiently disgusting to see the young absorbed in romances; but to see old age spending its few remaining Sabbaths in their perusal, is abhorrent and detestable.

This love of novelty may not be without its injurious effects upon the religious world. An appetite for new preachers is beginning to invade our congregations located in the retirement of the country, where the people for a series of years have been accustomed to behold their venerated pastors dispensing the word of life. There is too an increasing demand for religious news, which if not

guarded, may possibly lead to the neglect of solid information. Let us however avoid the allegation of the text, that we are always seeking something new.

2d. The species of literature here spoken of, should be principally used in the way of mental recreation. It is calculated to elevate the mind, to revive the exhausted powers, and adorn human life. But there are branches of study better calculated to give solidity and compactness to the intellectual powers. Among these, we may remark classical research, mathematical science, natural philosophy, ancient history, and many other branches. But infinitely above all, we place the Holy Scriptures, a volume that ever abounds with all that is new, and ever teems with all that is grand to those who use it aright. If our delight be in the law of the Lord, we shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters. Then, though our information may be narrow, or our intellect of an humble order, being the servants of Christ, we shall not seek to please men, but God; we shall love his praise more than the praise of men, and though our names may not be enrolled in the temple of fame, we shall have the infinitely superior honour of having them enrolled in Heaven.

3d. An excessive culture of the imagination is attended with danger. It ought to be cultivated to the glory of Him who gave it, and marks of consecration should be visible upon it. But where the cultivation of it is excessive, the mind

is unbalanced, and it may become the source of dire calamities. We may be led to neglect all the ordinary calls of duty, to form every scheme upon its suggestion, and to seek in life a thousand pleasures which life can never yield. We here use the language of an elegant writer. He, (speaking of the glorious Being who formed the imagination,) can excite images in the mind without the help of words, and make scenes rise up without the assistance of bodies or exterior objects. He can transport the imagination with such beautiful and glorious visions, as cannot possibly enter into our present conceptions, or haunt it with such ghastly spectres as would make us hope for annihilation, and think existence no better than a curse. In short, he can so exquisitely ravish or torture the soul through this single faculty, as might suffice to make the whole heaven or hell of any finite being.

4thly. In works of the imagination we should exercise discrimination. There may be found here all the varieties of excellence; every thing soft and tender, that diffuses a freshness of moral feeling over the soul; or there may be, agreeably to our selection, a vast deal to desolate the mind and pervert the taste. The cause of vice is often served by this fertile and creative power. Sometimes the sanguinary hero, who from the wreck of all integrity swims in an ocean of blood, is drawn in alluring colours, or the robber of the desert and the buccaneer of the deep may wind themselves around the

heart. The imagination of the writer may be so overcast as continually to shade our own, or it may be so brilliant that we are in danger of being misled.

In works of this kind we should accurately distinguish the object of the writer. If we find no mention of the very discriminating principles of revelation, we should not hastily conclude that the writer was lost to all sense of piety, because in other works he may have served the cause which we hold dearer than life. The object of a writer may be pure, even though his productions may not abound in evangelical thought to an extent that we might desire. Perhaps literary men are sooner won to a respect, and even love to the gospel, by mildness in our animadversions.—Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. Tenderness and compassion ought to be felt for the failings of literary men. But some unenlightened Christians seem to measure their attachment to the cause of Christ by the severity with which they treat their failings and pursuits. In this way some have contracted an invincible prejudice to the writings of Burns. His failings let us lament, the exceptionable passages of his works we may deeply regret, but let us cherish the good, and then we shall cherish some of the sweetest strains that ever fell from the Caledonian lyre.

5thly. The gravity of our literature does not

lessen the claims of Christianity. Some find a refuge in deeper walks of literature than those to which our attention has just been directed.

Their hearts may be habitually absorbed, their minds may be vigorously applied, and their time endlessly consumed, but in their estimation all this is entirely lawful. Entangled in the thicket of scientific controversy, or environed by a wilderness of learning, they never suspect that they may be as distant from their Maker, as those who are astray in more choice and flowery fields.

Finally, whatever our pursuits may be, let them all be consecrated to our Creator in Jesus Christ. Whatsoever things are lovely or of good report, if there be any praise, seek after such things. No one can tell the pleasures of a life of piety till he lead such a life. Devotedness to God is a fountain of pleasure ever full. Literary men, more than others, need a solace under the afflictions of the world. But God is ever ready to be their portion and to consecrate their every attainment by his Holy Spirit. This air of seriousness is not unsuitable to the occasion; for how often is the heart pained when we read the page of biography, and find men of highly cultured taste, plunged into affliction, and even coming to the gates of death without a Saviour in whom they can confide.

Whenever then we explore the works of God, or admire the powers of the mind, let us not fail to say,

> These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!
> Almighty, thine this universal frame;
> How wond'rous fair—thyself, how wond'rous then.

To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE VI.

The Superior Value of Christianity to Literature.

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—*Mat.* xiii. 45, 46.

The beautiful moral sentiment of the text was probably founded in the customs of the East. Either in the time of our Saviour, or anterior to it, the traffic here alluded to might have been diligently carried on, and Jesus Christ seized upon ordinary usages, as well as remarkable events, to advance the object of his mission. The intention of the text is to set the highest possible value on that system of religion which Jesus Christ came to make known, to enforce by his precious death, and after his ascension, to conduct to glorious triumphs and universal dominion.

In the preceding discourses, the immense value of literature has been admitted. We cannot be thought inimical to that on which such frequent eulogiums have been bestowed. But faithfulness to the souls of men, a sacred regard to the kingdom of Jesus, and a sincere love to the system of revealed truth, compel the writer to liken literature to the goodly pearls spoken of in the text, which ought to be surrendered with cheerfulness for the pearl of great price. There is something infinitely more valuable in the religion of the gospel, than in every scientific attainment, or all those accomplishments which are brought from the fields of a graceful literature. If it be asked whether we mean to disjoin Christianity and literature, in the superiority of the one for which we shall contend, we reply, that nothing is more remote from our intention. The disjunction takes place only till an humble attempt be made to establish the supremacy of Christianity, then, literature may renew its honourable alliance.

We have glanced at what literature may do for individuals and nations. But there are many things which it cannot do. It cannot produce satisfaction in the mind. All its attainments are deeply unsatisfying. We find ourselves possessed of a multitude of goodly pearls, but not of a pearl, bright, and pure, and weighty, that so enriches the mind as to forbid the heart to covet any thing in preference. It cannot reduce the power and palsy the strength of its own temptations. The mind is always in-

clined to be restless, grasping after larger and loftier views. Where is the individual ever satisfied with attainments in wealth. Not any eastern or western monarch, or the man whose possessions are as a wide kingdom, which he has never traversed, whose flocks cannot be counted by the shepherd, whose herds fill the valleys with their ceaseless lowing. Not the merchant-man, whose canvas is always whitening the deep, bringing swiftly into the hollow of his hand, the pearls of far distant climes. Not the poet, who, like Shenstone, comprises the rural beauties of a world within the range of his eye, where every walk guided downward to a crystal fountain, or upward to a sylvan temple, or where the eye lifted up, beheld at a distance mountains, round which were stretched the curtains of the skies, enclosing hills, manors, parks, rivers, on their way to the ocean, or lakes, fed by the exhaustless waterfall. Can power satisfy the mind? Whether that power be concerned with the bodies or minds of men, the fallen heart will desire its increase. To extend its limits is necessary, otherwise we fear its diminution. This leads the monarch to stretch his sceptre a little further, that it may here touch an island, or crush some disaffected province, or quell the fancied insurrection of a hamlet, or send a flash of terror on some unsubdued continent. All this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai, the Jew, sitting at the king's gate.

Fame is alike unsatisfying. The experience of

ages ought to convince us, that we cannot be contented with the most extensive reputation. The warrior lies down in his tomb, convinced that he might have done something for his reputation which he has failed to achieve. The man of science thinks, at the hour of death, perhaps, of some latent discovery; the merchant, of some untried scheme; or the man of imagination, of some unattempted theme. Let our fame extend far and wide, there is still a portion of the human family, among whom, if we were to sojourn, we should sojourn as strangers. The Indian of the desert knows not our name, nor does the Arab of the wilderness take it with emotion on his lips.

Let our researches be vast, they will leave a void in the heart. This is right, to a certain extent, because this world is not our resting place. We have an eternity to rest in, said an eminent scholar. But this concession does not invalidate the statement that a worm of dissatisfaction crawls around the attainments of our men of genius. What if a scholar has toiled successfully in one department of knowledge, in its other departments nothing is gained. He feels that human powers are circumscribed by a compass swept by the hand of Omnipotence, that time is short, and that as an hireling he must accomplish his day. He has displayed some powers of the mind, but other powers have been unemployed, and there have been no adventitious

circumstances by which they could be called into exercise. Though distinguished in literature, he may be obscure in science; though splendid in the imagination, he covets deep metaphysical fame. He turns with the tide, and desires to be whatever mankind applaud. If he study philosophy, he envies the praise of some illustrious poet—or history, he pants for the elegance of some charming essayist. The mind is often idolized, and this idol puts on different appearances, and turns upon us a hundred faces, to win our confidence, to relieve our weariness, and quicken our devotion. It drops among the worshippers goodly pearls, but never dismisses from its golden hand that pearl of great price, so well suited to that impoverished moral condition into which we have fallen. Turn over the records of literature, and tell me whether satisfaction has ever been the lot of literary men. Let Swift or Goldsmith, Dermody or Savage answer the question; or let us call upon an evening circle in Paris, in the days of Marmontel, or upon the Litchfield Confederacy, in the days of Darwin. It is believed that gleams of triumph fall occasionally on the heart of the man devoted to letters. Some vigorous thought, some noble image, some temporary popularity, or transient buzz of applause, or the winding up of all the scenes and characters of a new work, may produce a momentary joy. But happiness, founded on such a basis, is perishable as the tints which appear on the wing of an insect.

We will not return to this dissatisfaction of the mind with its own doings, but none can deny that it has a real existence. The Scriptures proclaim its source, but men know it not; else would they try the proper remedy to remove this disease, which has always been incurable by human skill. Philosophy has tried it, but it has been repeatedly baffled. Infidelity has been loud in its prescriptions, but its clamours are quickly hushed. Imagination has pointed to glowing prospects, but this worm has moved in unabated strength across its pictures, blighting its loveliest garlands. Turn we then to the Scriptures, whose leaves are always wet with the balm of Gilead. But, says the man of literature, this is the very remedy that we desire not. Why not, if it answer the purpose; because it will extinguish genius, put down our holy musings on departed greatness, break up our enchantment, and famish the mind. It will reduce us to the dust, and make us more dissatisfied. Such is the reasoning of those who know not the excellencies of that religion which is disclosed in the Scriptures. That the gospel will reduce all who embrace it, into an attitude becoming creatures, is not to be questioned. But it has no tendency to famish the mind, unless it can be famished by infinitude, a wisdom that is fathomless, or by introducing into the works of nature an omniscient Being, who leads us along the pathway of life, and retires with us to every shady nook and sweetens every soft retreat—who is al-

ways stretching his protection over our defenceless lives, who smiles upon us in the love of his Son, sending peace into the conscience, and fertility into the mind. Religion satisfies the soul, by putting us in possession of a Saviour. Not that man can ever be stationary in the divine life—An inspired apostle reached forth to those things that were before. We cannot pause amidst the perfect rest of heaven. But the satisfaction which is derived from every fresh attainment, is one cause of the ceaseless diligence of the soul to rise higher and higher.

But if literature cannot satisfy the heart, neither can it provide against the uncertainties of life. It has no power to break down the disappointments of the world. It promises much, but performs little. That is a most affecting incident in the life of Tasso, the Italian poet, where, after a series of adverse circumstances, he went to Rome to be crowned. But death deprived him of his coronation. It may be said that this was a solitary instance, but who can say this, who has ever pondered the fate of early genius. When about to reach the object of their hopes, how many have fallen in the unequal contest with death. Let the names of Chatterton, Clifton, Kirke White, Spenser, Larned, Ross, Durant, Summerfield, Eastburn, and Elizabeth Smith, bear a mournful testimony. In this list, we discover the name of Clifton, who would have been an honour to the literature of his country. We find the name of Larned, who fills a pre-eminence above all Ro-

man fame. From one end of this vast continent to the other, his voice was lifted up—a voice of music to the saint, but of thunder to the sinner. It was indeed delightful to see the aged, and the young, the man of simple habits, or senatorial wisdom and polished eloquence, sitting at the feet of this extraordinary youth. And is there not something touching in the early decease of Elizabeth Smith? We follow her in her deep meditations among the works of God. We ascend with her the lofty cliff, and wait with her till she puts its summit into her sketch-book. But death haunts its victim. Into his hand she early resigned her pencil, and he draws another kind of scenery, in which the hollow grave makes a conspicuous figure. If in every haunt of genius the whitened tomb were to meet the eye, or in every copse a marble sepulchre were newly hewn, it would teach an impressive lesson, but not more impressive than we may read in our daily observation.

For wise purposes, every human prospect is surrounded with a liability to change. Mutability is stamped upon every thing with which fallen men have to do. We should suppose that men would avail themselves of this dread uncertainty, as a powerful motive to operate upon their eternal safety. But that which was intended as a motive to action, is made a motive for listlessness.

Some men of literary habits are prepared for the uncertainties of life, but not they who rely on their literature. Their rock is not our rock.

But where the deep piety of the Scriptures has been added, then resignation and meekness have taken the place of those lawless passions, so often awakened by a view of the uncertainties of our earthly being.

But what can literature do in adversity? By adversity we mean a reverse in temporal circumstances, changing our condition from elevation to lowliness in life, sending us away from the hill far down into the vale. Literature is admirably calculated to give an additional charm to prosperity, though, without piety, it cannot carry us to the full height of enjoyment. Nor should it be disguised, that even in adversity, it may be a source of consolation. It sometimes shows a spot of sunshine on the heavy cloud, but it cannot roll away the cloud. Possessed of delicacy and refinement of feeling, keen is that anguish which has often preyed on men of genius. The world reproaches them for inattention to their temporal affairs, when perhaps they deserve not the reproach. Men prove treacherous in whom confidence has been reposed; even courtiers, princes and kings, have been guilty of ingratitude. Patrons withdraw, until, perhaps, the man of genius, whose name is to adorn the latest annals of the world, expires in a hovel. Facts seal the truth of this representation.

To meet evils like these, it is the duty of all men to make preparation. Fluctuating are the scenes of life—rapid and astonishing its changes. The

progeny of beggars may become kings, or the progeny of kings may become beggars. If the mariner, in an unruffled sea, stand prepared for a tempest, or the warrior girded for the moment of surprise, it behoves all men to fortify themselves with established principles for the hour of adversity. But men of literature should be at especial pains to gird up the loins of their minds, for their pursuits are watched with an eye of jealousy.

There are other sorrows which it is not in the power of all mental attainments to heal. The loss of property is one thing, and the loss of relatives another. Death comes into families, thins the domestic circle, and leaves the number less. The heart staggers under the burden of its sorrows. We shut up in the tomb those who have entwined themselves around our hearts. Has there never sounded from the page of biography, a voice, more like the moaning of despair, than the profound, though suppressed grief of pious resignation? We may here confidently call on all men to judge between the religion of the gospel, and any other source of consolation.

But can literature make provision for death? Such are its allurements, and so much have all its objects to do with the present, that it puts death far away. You secure to the student a large measure of happiness, if you could but extinguish the remembrance, that death lurks any where in the neighbourhood of his retreat. But as the huntsman

sometimes pursues his panting game into the deepest seclusion, so death does not tire in the chase till he has reached the hiding place of his appointed victim.

Not to speak of those pains which precede this momentous event, when disease wastes the body, and fatal consumption cleaves fast to its victim. What are days then but days of mourning, and our nights but nights of anguish? Reduced to the feebleness of infancy, the mind impaired, memory losing its recollections apace, the fancy wild and unmanageable—Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him! Come here, idolater of literature, and look upon the dim eye, the hollow cheek, and dejected brow of one like yourself, who has explored all science, and gathered goodly pearls out of every field, but that of revealed truth. What are his consolations for this most important hour. Tell him of wealth, fame, eloquence, mental beauty and fresh discoveries in science. He smiles in hopeless despondency. They are no more to him, than the loveliness of a song, from one with whom he has been accustomed to play well on an instrument. He wants something better than works of genius, to shed a gleam on the dark valley which he is about to attempt. We do not say that the desire of fame is extinguished in his heart. Infuse strength into his limbs and health into his cheek, and he may wax bold in ingratitude, and sweetly renew his intercourse with all human books, and dream not

perhaps of opening an intercourse with the inspired volume.

But all this is preparatory to that final stroke, that produces an eternal separation betwixt him and the endearments of life. It is antecedent to the determined entrance and resistless blow of death. His name is committed to the roll of the deceased, a roll, the number of which has never been told. The feet of them who are to carry him out, stand ready at the door. He is wound up in the grave. All flesh is grass, but the word of our God endureth forever and ever. But the deficiency of literature will further appear, from its utter inadequacy to change the heart. It may send out an embellishment over the whole character, or it may lop off a thousand exterior vices, but an entrance into the heart surpasses its power. We delight in the amiable character so often exhibited by scholars. But if revelation be true, its truths must be applied to all men, and that revelation depicts ruins in the hearts of all men, which it is not in the power of reason to repair. If the light of science could lead men to the love of God, revelation would have been unnecessary, unless we adopt the principles of some, who contend that it was principally given to expand the light of reason.

The inadequacy of literature to produce any holy impression on the heart, is manifest from the fact, that many who have pursued it to the greatest extent, have still relished vice. They have proved callous

to all the restraints of conscience and the obligations of religion. Some, indeed, have been vicious who have made Christianity their study; but had there been as profound a devotedness to the essence of Christianity, as there has been to the essence of literature, their vices would have been extirpated. In looking back upon ages that are past, we cannot discover that any change of the heart was ever contemplated by the systems of philosophy. The moral condition of men did not call for this truth to be whispered in the academies of Athens, or gently distilled into the ear of solitary students. That condition demanded that it should be boldly uttered and indefatigably applied.

It is one of the fixed determinations of mere literary men, to cast away this doctrine. It humbles pride, it abases the heart. One of the highest proofs of total depravity is this, that men, acquainted with all science, are utterly incompetent to comprehend some of the plainest truths of revelation. They betray, in their letters and their books, a most provoking ignorance, on every point connected with the acceptance of a penitent sinner. This is frequently the effect of design; but there are some who possess so much integrity, that we cannot suspect them of a design to insult the religion of the Scriptures. Yet, with what propriety may we say, even to them—Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?

But a renewal of the image of God upon the heart,

is a truth conspicuously bright upon every page of revelation. There is no doubtfulness in the oracles which announce it, and no hesitancy about the question, whether we must be regenerate or unregenerate.

Further, it is contended that literature cannot form a suitable character for man. It may forever surrender this privilege, until it can change the heart. The mind is not so much the fountain of character as the affections which reign in the heart. If the mind were capable of imprinting a holy feature on the character, why such fervid eloquence from the Indian, when recounting his guilty deeds, and holding up to view his tomahawk dripping with blood? or the chieftain, who summons his mind to survey all the arrangements of a coming battle? but whither does his heart retreat when thousands fall, when the groans of the dying fill his obdurate ear, when villages, towns and tents are wrapt in fire? Flushed with victory—with an understanding admired—applauded by his country—the boasted moral sense is buried with the slain, and resembles the hideous putrefaction of the tomb.

In the character of men universally, there are odious features. There are shades of difference, but there is no faultless character. In those who live in courts, pride, ambition, revenge, self-interestedness, so far from being subdued, are applauded. That man might justly be suspected of an absence of reason, who, in his thoughtful moments, would de-

cline awarding to the Christian character, a preference to that which is the product of the schools and the offspring of courts and camps. We speak not of pretenders to Christian character, but of the character itself, in all its simplicity and meekness. Many characters are laid open in the Scriptures. They have defects. But were we watched by the eye of inspiration, and our defects recorded by its inflexible pen, before them might we retire into obscurity.

But look at the character of Jesus. The record of it has long been before the world. Where is the blemish? The lives of philosophers have been diligently hunted, but, compared with him, all their wisdom was folly. In a view, then, of these defects in literature, would we sedulously urge its students to cast away their multitude of goodly pearls, till they secure the pearl of great price, recommended in the text.

Such is a narrow view of the defects of literature in its application to our condition. But these defects do not exist in the Holy Scriptures. It follows then, that so far as these deficiencies may be concerned, there is something more valuable in the religion of the gospel. But we have no language in which to convey our thoughts of the immense value of the gospel. The text calls it a pearl of great price. If we view it in connexion with nations and kingdoms, its value will appear immense. We may possibly claim for it, in this view, more

than multitudes might be willing to admit, but we shall not claim for it more than historical evidence will warrant. It sheds light upon whole countries—countries which every other fountain of light has left in darkness. It reveals a Being, whose presence fills all lands, and whose glory burns bright in the central points of the universe, attracting the deep drawn gaze of every holy creature. It discloses an atonement, after the rendering up of which, none other need be demanded in Heaven or on earth. It removes the curtain from off the divine throne, which enwrapt the Lamb by whom the atonement was rendered. It brings the earth into contact with heaven, and commands all its inhabitants to listen, whilst Jehovah breaks up the covenant of works as the basis of our justification. It unquestionably evolves the moral duties of our race with an authority the most indisputable, as if an angel had lighted in every human habitation, or as if the trumpet of judgment had sounded. It takes from off the throne of God a silvery light, wherewith to deck the hut of the saint, to gild the couch of disease, and burnish the chain of the prisoner. It strips away the deep curtain of ignorance which the Fall hung round the world, in the ample folds of which, mortals have been revelling for ages. But let us not ask what it does. What has it not done? Well may the pretended philosophy of men excite a smile of contempt by the side of the Scriptures. The philosophy of Greece and Rome! 'tis but the faint whis-

pering of insects, stirring out in a night of thick Pagan darkness.

We are sometimes asked the question, What has the gospel done? But where shall we begin the indignant reply? Shall we encircle the land of Goshen, when the people of Israel had light in all their dwellings? Shall we look on the parted wave that retires, murmuring at the unusual touch which rends it asunder? or shall we pause in the tent of the Jew, and ask him for his manna that came from the hollow of the Divine hand? or take our station by a rock, whence gushed forth a fountain, winding its way to panting flocks and herds?

It did for Israel what every system would have failed to do. It has made that kingdom a consecrated spot on the map of the world. It has delivered a law which displays to all men their true condition. Look at Judea, and compare the views there entertained of the eternity and independence of God, with those entertained by neighbouring nations. Let Dagon, Ashtaroth, Rimmon, Baal, witness. Israel indeed degenerated into idolatry, but this was an open violation of their covenant with God, and an unpardonable transgression of the very genius of their ecclesiastical system. With many, idolatry is a proof of a religious tendency in the hearts of men, whereas the Scriptures consider it as one of the basest forms in which our depravity can show itself.

View the apostle Paul in his journeys through

Greece, the Lesser Asia, and at Rome, and if he revealed not a better system than was there enjoyed, then must truth be forever powerless on the hearts of men; or view him at Athens, where by a few bold and masterly strokes of eloquence, he displays the majesty of God in the very metropolis of Grecian literature.

The gospel has gone round the nations, surveying their systems of religion, and pronouncing them to be nothing but a strong delusion to believe a lie. It has entered into no compromise. It has overturned the carved image, or the hideous temple with its gods of wood or its gods of gold. It has sent the priests of cruelty, revered in a superstitious age, to be its hewers of wood and drawers of water. It has dotted whole continents and islands with churches. It has stretched a line of brilliant and beautiful Sabbaths along six thousand years, and on those Sabbaths it has commanded busy millions to pause and draw down to earth the foretaste of a better country. Into that better country it has gathered millions, rejoicing in the name of Jesus, who have died unknown to song, but whose humble virtues adorn the city, the obscurity of the wilderness, the glade of the forest, or the glen of the mountain. Its prevalency has not been universal; but why? because it has had to do not with a race who have loved it, but a race that have repelled it; not a race whom it has flattered, but a race whom it has condemned; not a race who have

eagerly drunk its lessons, but one by whom these lessons have been rejected. This is the condemnation that light has come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light.

It has been charged too with being the source of wars, misery and crime. Its principles, the corruption of its principles, and the perversion of its meaning have been blended together. The blood of massacres has been taken to seal up the vision of inspiration; but the benignity of the system is now indignantly bursting the seal, and displaying to an admiring world the pearl of great price.

In view then of what the gospel has done for the nations, may we not unhesitatingly pronounce, that it is more valuable than all science, than all systems of Pagan idolatry and Mohamedan superstition. But it views man not only in his capacity as a member of a nation, or in his relative capacity, but it comes to every one charged with an individual commission and a personal application. What then does it perform for every individual of our race, who duly weighs its annunciations?

Does it nothing more than lies within the scope of profound science or elegant literature? Does it impart no larger measure of sanctity than the imagination attributes to philosophers and bards? It does infinitely more. The distance betwixt this and an earthly philosophy is just the distance between heaven and earth. It enters then into the heart, abases it, kills its pride, extirpates its lusts, and turns back the tide of its moral affections. It

takes a strict scrutiny, and spares no evil. It checks the lawless wanderer, and binds his heart upon a full view of the law in its length and breadth. It hunts down every refuge, saps every false hope, overturns every groundless dependance, disappoints every unwarranted expectation, removes every plea, and presses an instantaneous compliance with its demands. These demands are summarily comprehended in repentance for every sin, faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, and a new life.

The new life of which we speak is nothing but a consequence of the regeneration of our nature. There is an alliance betwixt angels and holy men. There are blemishes in the best of men, but they habitually imitate the Lord Jesus. We speak not of hundreds who adorn not the gospel, who perhaps make it a cloak for their iniquity. We are speaking of such men as Hooker, Leighton, Edwards, Scott, Watts, Doddridge, Fenelon, and many others who have drawn from the Scriptures the resources of a holy life. Here we cannot forbear to express our profound gratification at the new light which has been thrown on the character of Howard the philanthropist. Fruitful in the invention of schemes for advancing the happiness of men by exterminating human misery, fearless and untiring in their execution, we felt persuaded that such philanthropy could have been none other than a fruit from off the tree of life.

But Biography, hitherto unfaithful to its trust,

has made the philanthropist to stand before us adorned only at the hands of nature; but now he stands adorned at the hands of grace, and fitted for his work by its ever fresh supplies, and that strength which is always brought away from a throne of mercy, erected for all the needy.

There is another light in which we may view the gospel, and that is in its power to exterminate evils. This it can do from the face of countries, and the hearts of individuals. Philosophy may discover that the world abounds with evils, but these evils have never been removed by its inventions. They continue, and except so far as Christianity shall curb them, they increase with every year and day. This is a truth which ever since the fall has lain on the surface of human knowledge. Pride still clings to man; the fell purpose of revenge still rankles in the heart; the duellist still seeks the sylvan recess with the weapon of death in his hand; the assassin still lurks in the thicket; war still sounds its trumpet. These things do prevail where Christianity has gained an establishment, but not where Christianity is embraced in its purity. The mild and benevolent principles of our Saviour can never be made to speak any thing inconsistent with holiness.

If men will love their vices better than that which condemns them, that which condemns them deserves not censure. Thus God might plant ten thousand burning suns over the pit of perdition, but what would it avail if the tenants of that pit made

use of their light to discover new schemes of iniquity.

But Christianity has had an efficiency in correcting evils. Thousands have submitted their hearts to its subduing influence, whilst tens of thousands have felt its benefits without a saving acquaintance with its power. It does good by its exterior reformation. Whilst every other form of religion has fostered idolatry, this has shown it no favour. Unceremonious and unaccustomed to compliances, it has held on its way and aspires to universal supremacy.

It must be ceded, that Christianity has not removed all the evils of the world; evils still cover our land and all Christian countries, and in Pagan countries they throng to an overwhelming multitude. But all that can be demanded in the Scriptures, can be shown to exist. It has an adequacy to extirpate every evil, and is only hindered by the fallen condition of men from executing instantly its high commission. Let the truths of the gospel be made the daily food of every mind, and its precepts the rule of every life, and our world would quickly wear the holy bloom of Eden.

But the value of the gospel will further appear by considering the positive blessings it bestows. It develops the poverty of man, that it may make him rich; his blindness, that it may open his eyes; his nakedness, that it may clothe him with the garments of salvation. Nothing can be more benevo-

lent than the course pursued by our Saviour, in healing the sick, the blind, and the palsied. Painters have pourtrayed him as shedding forth virtue on these objects of wo. Then the blind saw the return of light and shade, of morn and eve, the palsied rose from their couch, and the lame felt unusual vigour going forth upon their limbs. Behold here a moral representation of the efficacy of the gospel in shedding forth its blessings upon a guilty world. The age of miracles has gone, but the gospel has lost nothing of its power. Through its Divine founder, it is still mighty to save.

It can give peace to the most troubled conscience, and pardon to the most guilty.

It can melt the most obdurate, or reduce the most lofty. It can plant on the soul the supreme love of our Maker. It can strip off the apparel of pride, or the disguise of hypocrisy. Are examples called for? we need none but the apostle Paul. He has been fixed on by an able writer as sufficient to establish the truth of Christianity. View him as Saul of Tarsus, and then as Paul before the Jewish Senate, before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, on Mars Hill, or in Rome, when he boldly declared, for the hope of Israel, am I bound with this chain. So various are the excellencies of his character, that volumes have been written in their development.

The value of the gospel may be very striking at the solemnities of death. Then its superiority to every other system must inevitably be made mani-

fest. When our curtains are drawn to enclose us in our last earthly solitude with our Maker, it is time to reflect on eternity. But it is a fact pre-eminently to the honour of the gospel, that no dying man has ever regretted his devotedness to it. We can show instances of deep regret that so little attention has been given to its requirements, or instances of scholars who have departed in holy triumph, or we can prove that many have lamented at the gates of death that the trifles of literature, the fruitless speculations of science, the charms of philosophy have too much engrossed their minds, whilst many who have perseveringly stood away from the consolations of religion have died in despair.

The last view of the value of the gospel is that it surrounds all our being with the grandeur of eternity. Did it here utter a doubtful sentiment, its value would be greatly impaired. But it refers all our actions to that day when the thrones shall be set for judgment. It already tolls the funeral knell of our world. The dead must rise, and all men stand at the bar of Omniscience. In view of these awful solemnities, well might we comply with the demand of the text—to seek the pearl of great price.

In attempting to apply the subject, we feel that no forcible or picturesque language, no solemn appeals are required. The truths delivered lie level with every capacity. But should the eye of any

student ever fall on these pages, we tenderly beseech him to ponder the worth of all mental attainments as separated from the gospel, and he will find them in comparison as the gems which line the rivulet, weighed against a mountain of gold. The Roman orator once conferred a high eulogium on literature in its adaptedness to prosperity or adversity, sickness or health; but had he lived now, and felt the power of the gospel, that eulogium would have been transferred to Christianity.

Whilst we exhort him then to make every useful and elegant attainment, let him not forget that precious Revelation which has been sent among men. Let him study it more than all the records of philosophy. Should he be possessed of genius prematurely ripened, let him remember how often death selects a splendid victim. Should he have been long in the ways of science, let him quickly subordinate his heart to this gospel, and let all enrol these words on the memory—Behold the Judge standeth at the door. Amen.

DISCOURSE VII.

Humility an Ornament to Literary Men.

"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein."—*Luke*, xviii. 17.

THERE is a moral sublimity in the character of our Saviour. Meekness and humility were embodied in all his actions. He does not enforce humility simply by words, but we have only to open the Scriptures, and we shall find that all his actions bespeak a lowly heart. No teacher, save Jesus Christ, had a right to give commands involving the practice of humility; because all other teachers have allowed the indulgence of pride. Their instructions concerned the few, instead of being given to the multitude—the rich were caressed, whilst the poor were forsaken—the ignorant were left in darkness, whilst they who possessed taste and refinement, were led onward to delicious fountains of wisdom.

That the text inculcates humility and simplicity, is evident, from the circumstances under which it was spoken. Infants were carried to the Saviour. But the disciples were inclined to treat with haughtiness, both the parents and their offspring. Forbid them not, said Jesus, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven. By being received and nourished in the bosom of the new dispensation, they may one day become its ornament and its strength.

In attempting to unfold the subject, we propose

1st. To mention some of the sources of pride.

2d. To define humility.

3d. To urge some motives to the possession and practice of humility.

Pride may arise from various sources. Every gift of Providence may be perverted. Bodily strength may so elate the heart as to make its possessor the terror of his neighbourhood. Personal beauty may fix the gaze of every beholder. The varied accomplishments of life may foster this ruinous principle. Some boast of the long line of their ancestry, their estates, titles which fell to them at their birth, or of what they call the acquired gifts of fortune. Some glory in having raised themselves, from deep obscurity, others in their poverty, because they think it undeserved. Some are celebrated in the arts, others renowned in war. Successful speculation, commercial enterprise, sagacity in the management of temporal affairs, a foresight of threatened evils, skilfulness in agriculture, abun-

dant harvests, may all nourish a sense of superiority. Pride may arise from contrasting a life of activity, with that inactivity which marks the lives of other men. Comparing themselves among themselves, and measuring themselves by themselves, they are not wise. There is no pursuit in which we can engage that is free from temptation; no advantage we can gain, no possession we can touch, but may lift the soul of a sinful man above that posture of humility, in which it should habitually abide.

Pride has too much influence in all our mental attainments. It will rise with the man of letters at the morning hour, and continue with him till evening, and at midnight it will repeat its visits. As a brilliant spectre, it haunts every enchanted castle reared by the imagination. There is nothing, perhaps, that makes one man feel so superior to another, as to be possessed of a larger stock of information, more genius and invention, more splendour of talent, and greater vigour of application. He sways the multitude. His opinions are oracular, his judgment dictatorial; from his decision there is no appeal. If he be a poet, his writings may have been read in distant countries, woven into the memory of thousands; they may have been sung in the glade and the thicket, or they may have drawn tears from the eye of royalty. If he be an historian, kings may have derived wisdom from his pages, and statesmen may have drawn thence the materials of their fame. Should he be a man of

science, scholars may despair of ever rivalling his discoveries. There needs no argument to show that the pride of literature may be an inveterate evil. Fame, genius, talents! perverted gifts, intended to humble us; but how often do they become the sources of unholy passions. Yet all this is in opposition to the text—that whosoever receiveth not the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in nowise enter therein.

We proceed, in the second place, to define humility. It should not be blended with meanness. The humility of the gospel does not involve any disposition that takes away self-respect. A Christian must respect himself, because he acts, not so much with a view to himself, as with a view to his Maker. It differs also from mere modesty. Diffidence is often assumed, because it is believed to be ornamental. A distrust of our own talents may be produced by many causes, which do not operate in the production of humility. Neither are we to mistake mortified habits of living for this sterling virtue. Pascal was a man of Christian humility, but the manifestation of it was attended with errors. All that is embraced in these errors, might have existed, without the substance of that which is demanded in the gospel. Charles V. might have been as sagacious a worldling, and as crafty a politician in his romantic solitude, as in his court. It is not impossible for a man to become a martyr to certain political opinions, and patiently endure all that the

government can inflict, and yet endure all with improper feelings. A man, under the garb of religion, may descend into his cell, and still have in Heaven no enduring substance. Pride may rankle in the heart of a monk, as well as in the heart of a monarch.

Some have wished to reduce the high claims of the gospel to a standard of their own invention. Hence they make plainness of attire, and an outward garb of mortification, an invariable effect of humility. Others have considered it as incompatible with energy of character. This is a mistake. Men of pride have always been energetic in the production of evil, whilst men of humility have always been energetic in the production of good. Let Luther and Calvin, Martyn and Scott, together with a vast cloud of other witnesses, answer, whether lowliness of heart debars, in the least degree, from a relentless accomplishment of our favourite schemes.

We give a summary view of humility. It is a virtue, in every respect peculiar to Christianity, and is wrought by the efficacious influence of the gospel on the heart. It reduces the lofty thoughts which men entertain of their moral standing, and causes them to feel their fallen condition, their actual transgressions, the depravity of their hearts and lives. It subordinates the mind to the Holy Scriptures. Though it be a virtue materially connected with the life, it begins in the heart. Being a precious fruit of the Holy Spirit, the germ is de-

posited in the process of regeneration. It receives and relishes the mysteries of the gospel. It accepts the *whole* revelation. It abases the heart before divine purity—the law, the atonement, the condescension of the Holy Spirit, in his dwelling among men. It is a fixed habit of the soul—for though pride may rise, it is gradually conquered and subdued. In a word, it realizes the delightful image of the text, that whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in nowise enter therein.

Humility, then, implies a child-like temper. The person possessed of it is, for the most part, free from that confidence in his own judgment, and that haughtiness of opinion, which so often mark our gifted men who possess it not. He who daily reads the Scriptures with such a temper, finds that he is fallen, and this is sufficient to abase him—that he is inclined to transgress, and this carries him to the Source of strength—that he is depraved, and this brings him nearer and nearer to the atonement of the Saviour. He imitates the Saviour in lowliness of mind, and is humbled that he does not resemble him more fully. He shrinks from a comparison with other men, if that comparison is to awaken pride. Where others see virtues, he sees defects. Instead of lording it over others, he is cheerfully the servant of all. He aspires continually to be the servant of the Most High, but is abundantly willing to serve men, if that service be con-

sistent with the obedience he owes to God. He compassionates human ignorance and pities its infirmities—but all errors are to be tried, not by his own standard, but the standard of the Scriptures. Whilst he laments the failings of others, he is strict and unyielding with his own. At all times, and under all circumstances, humility implies a proper estimation of ourselves, as creatures—sinful creatures—contrasting our feebleness with Divine power, our diminutiveness with the Divine immensity—our folly with the Divine wisdom, and our dependence with the eternal and underived independence of God. The obedience required in the Scriptures, the purity of the Divine law, the life of the Saviour, the example of good men in every age, the small amount of good which can be accomplished by the most vigorous efforts—all become motives to increasing lowliness. There are instances of this humility among literary men, but it has not been a product of their literature. It has originated from that system delivered in the Holy Scriptures. That humility which distinguished Fenelon, has cast a gleam of loveliness on his life, and will shed continual loveliness on the perpetual ages to come, in which his memory will be held in fond admiration. But there is scarcely a finer instance of lowliness, on any uninspired record, than that which appears in the last days of Scott. Had not this able expositor been such a man, his eulogy would not have been found on these pages. But who can forbear to

award him the fullest tribute of praise, for preserving so ornamental a humility, in the midst of usefulness so extensive, and a reputation so honourably acquired. His kindness to the poor, his condescension to the ignorant, his untiring diligence under adverse circumstances, his superiority to applause, his dignified elevation above all those petty plans by which men gain ascendency, his freeness from vanity, constitute the memorial of his humility, furnishing a refreshing instance, in these latter days, of those genuine effects which the gospel is calculated to produce on the opinions, the habits and life of an individual.

We proceed, in the third place, to suggest a few motives to the possession and practice of humility. Let the reader bear in mind that we have an especial reference to literary men.

1st. All the objects which foster pride, are transient in their nature. When we look upon every thing in our possession as passing away, it ought to subdue our feelings to lowliness. Heathen poets and Pagan philosophers have admitted, as fully as language can express it, that earthly objects cannot satisfy the mind, because they are vanishing every hour. Every thing earthly is hastening away upon the footsteps of every minute.—Power is of short duration.—Admiration cannot long be sustained. Popularity is fleeting as our breath.—Riches take to themselves wings.—Personal beauty is soon turned into deformity. Alas! the inconstancy of hu-

man objects and pursuits has, in every age, been the theme of touching declamation. Yet there is an inconsistency between the sentiments and the practice of men. Whilst with their lips they confess the vanity of the world, in their hearts they believe the world to be worth the pains taken to acquire it. They cling to it, though it constantly deludes their hopes. Is it not then surprising, that men should rear a superstructure of happiness upon the basis of temporal gains, the gifts of fortune, the accumulation of riches? Perishable basis! Could an angel, in the full enjoyment of his ceaseless round of bliss, feeling that his happiness is settled on the perpetual foundation of the government of God, be dismissed awhile, to make the circuit of our world, how great would be his astonishment. Here he would behold kings, confident in their thrones, when all history testifies that their possession is uncertain. The star that blazes on the bosom of royalty may disappear in the revolution of a day, or the lapse of an hour may enfeeble the hand that sways a sceptre. He might behold cities that appear gay to the sight, and he might foresee that ere long the owl would hold his court there; or he might look upon their cemeteries, in which their whole generations would quickly lie down. He might visit the hamlet, and behold its surrounding glades filled with graves; or he might see the funeral train, just moving onward to the house of death. He would see merchant-men count-

ing their gains in the morning, in all the glee of an unholy exultation—and in the evening, weeping over their altered fortunes. But would he find a race, feeling their dependent state, their liability to change, and hence deriving humility? No, verily; he would find a race, proud and haughty, and each one saying of his favourite schemes—Is not this great Babylon that I have builded?

2d. Nothing is more common, than for men to allow the perishing nature of the gains and emoluments of the world, who still set an undue value on the mind and its productions. It is contended that something substantial results from a well furnished mind, that glory and renown may be acquired, that genius consecrates every spot where it dwells, and flings tender associations over the countries it inhabits. All this we admit to the utmost desirable extent. But we must deny that without the consecration of the mind to God, that it is productive of any thing substantial enough to invite the confidence of men. All the glory acquired by it is perishable. It brings melancholy reflections, to go over the list of poets, orators and philosophers, and see how their renown has passed away. It has all ended in a dream. In moments of serious reflection, all their doings seem to us as the employments of a bustling day, succeeded by the stillness of the evening, or the darkness of the midnight. We have their books, but the writers know it not. We have their thoughts, but our admiration brings them

not from the bed of death. The pilgrim visits their tombs, but they start not at the sound of his footsteps. No mortal power can break their sleep. Alike to them is the thunder of applause, or the song of the lonely wanderer, chaunted on their graves. They care alike for the furious tempest, or the whispering breeze, that shakes the dew-drop from the willow that shades their tombs. But there is a more solemn reflection. Suppose that the gospel should be true, and that the trump shall one day sound. Then they come up, not to hear human applause, but to a dread accountability.

We do not at all deny that literary men may acquire something like the semblance of humility by considerations drawn from death, the fleeting nature of applause, and the emptiness of posthumous renown. But far more than this is necessary to make the humility of the gospel. It is required to feel deeply and daily the uncertainty of life, the necessity of preparation for death, and of being alive to a country which death has never entered, where no funeral dirge is ever sung, where all is durable and nothing transient.

3d. It is certain that humility invites the confidence of our fellow men. We speak not of humility as it may appear in men who, bent on popularity, manage to gain it by condescension to certain popular arts. This is pride in a haggard garb. But there is a genuine lowliness which mankind seldom ever mistake. Literary men may gain admiration.

Mankind may be astonished, but they will not love the haughty. Whereas the image of lowliness appearing over the whole character will dwell with them from month to month, and year to year. Such a man may visit his habitation in peace, secure of the good will of all around him, or when he mingles with the crowd, they take knowledge that he has been with Jesus. He may rove the desert, or lie down at night in the wigwam of the Indian, in the tent of the Arab, or the kraal of the African. He is safe in the synagogues of Jews, or the mosques of Mohammed; for mankind feel that God has erected his temple in the soul of that man; and whosoever defileth the temple of God, him shall God destroy.

4th. It ought to humble us, when we consider that adversity is more or less the lot of all men. Some dwell in obscurity all their lives, others rise for a while into eminence, and are plunged back again into obscurity. There is apparently an unequal distribution of things in the present life. The most unworthy sometimes rise into the possession of wealth. The most licentious sometimes acquire renown. But the chequered scenes of life are often marked by a signal interposition of Providence. He sometimes casts a dart of keen affliction among families, in whose gaiety, but for this, there would be no cessation. When he afflicts, the affliction tells loudly on the fancied comforts of the world. For a season, the voice of mourning succeeds the voice of

music. Happy would it be if we were then able to say, Sweet are the uses of adversity; or, in infinitely weightier language, Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Humility is one of the sweet fruits which spring from sanctified adversity, and that men may bring forth such fruit they sometimes lose their earthly all, part with their children, weep on the borders of the grave, and suffer affliction in their own persons. In the midst of daily disappointments, we should not assume an air of independence, and in the midst of our daily mercies we should be constrained to be humble.

5thly. Humility is further enforced by the consideration that God claims a propriety in all those gifts which lift up the soul to pride. This principle, capable of being discovered by reason, is rendered infinitely clearer by Revelation. God never looks down upon the world without recognising his stewards among all its inhabitants. That man spends his life in an awful mistake who looks upon any thing in his possession as his own. God claims all things from the rising to the setting sun. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. Has not God directed our attention to that time when he will sit in judgment upon every gift entrusted to our management, and every talent committed to our keeping. Happy they who shall then be able to say—Here is thine own with usury. There

have been men who have gloried in the appropriation of their wealth to the Giver; and there have been men of high mental endowments, who have studied and laboured assiduously under the hourly prospect of that solemn annunciation—The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

6thly. This humility may be further enforced by the testimony of the Scriptures. Besides express declarations and unequivocal commands, there are facts well worth our attention. On the one hand, they reveal circumstances in which the most touching humility has been displayed, and circumstances in which pride has met with a fatal overthrow. There is a striking contrast in the loftiness of Cain, and the humility of Abel. The one meekly submits to the revelation of his Maker, whilst the other displays a high and unhallowed disdain. The one erects an altar and offers what God required; the other brings an offering which involves no sense of guilt, no need of pardon. The inspired page has given one the glory of martyrdom, but the other it has consigned to the abhorrence of all, except that of a late noble writer. He has thrown a colouring on the character of Cain, which when it fades away will leave the original in a more blighted haggardness than ever.

Neither were the deeds of Pharaoh, Jezebel, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, committed in vain to the Holy Scriptures. David, the king of Israel, is at one time an example of pride and perverse-

ness, at another of deep and pungent repentance. Then he falls into the dust, where alone true safety is found for a mortal. In the labours and self-denials of apostles, we may read the lessons of humility, but above all in the manger of Bethlehem.

7th. The character of our Redeemer should be a constraining motive to the use of this virtue. No tongue has ever done justice to it, and the annals of the world can show nothing like it. His whole course was conspicuous for humility. However glorious the truth he uttered, he was not elated. He abounded in beautiful parables, but they all inculcated lowliness of mind; he wrought splendid miracles which drew forth unbounded admiration; but he was superior to admiration. He alone formed a true estimate of human applause, for he knew how soon its voice would be hushed into silence. He has shown the evil of sin in a light the most odious, and in his death has put upon it the seal of everlasting reprobation.

Instead of being urged incessantly to form our character upon the models of antiquity it would be well to ponder the character of Jesus Christ. It deserves to be studied with fixed attention. Then would our lives be worthy to be copied, fertile as they would inevitably be, in all that is benevolent and lowly.

8thly. Our last motive is taken from that day of judgment which is revealed in the Scriptures, a day which will effectually level all human dis-

tinctions. There may be distinctions then, but not distinctions which arise from birth, family, wealth or talents. The monarch will be no more than the peasant in the solemnities of judgment.

What foundation can there be for pride, under the revelation of so momentous a truth as the judgment day, when mankind shall be ranged into two classes. Moral distinctions alone shall then exist. They that loved God and served the Saviour, shall then receive a wreath of glory that fadeth not away. But they that have perverted the gifts of Providence shall meet with a dreadful disappointment. They that have not wrought for the Saviour during the time of their earthly being, shall have no part in that eternal being, to which he will advance his followers.

In applying this subject, we remark in the first place on the needfulness of humility to the ministry. The text was intended to teach the too haughty disciples of our Saviour a lesson of lowliness. A charge which our Saviour gave to Peter at the Sea of Tiberias, has something of the same significancy —Feed my sheep,—feed my lambs.

He who undertakes this office has cause to tremble: Wo is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. He must know what is meant by working while it is day, for the night cometh in which no man can work. All the world must be alike to him, because he has no control over the sphere

in which he will be fixed. If ministers be stars, they are stars marshalled by the King of Zion, and they cast light into whatever flock over which they are commanded to move.

It is delightful to see the ministry in the midst of their literary researches, preserving a supreme attachment to their appropriate work, and making every attainment tributary to the salvation of men. Some even in old age labour assiduously for the Saviour's cause, whilst others even in the noon of life may tire in their course, won by the fancied charms of civil, political or literary life.

2dly. There is an alarming truth uttered in the text. There is a possibility implied, that we may never enter into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. There is even a positive certainty that, except we become as little children, we shall never make a right kind of entrance into the church. We may serve the church with apparent zeal, defend her principles and contend for her bulwarks, but all this will avail nothing unless it be done with a lowly temper.

Our destinies may be interwoven with the destinies of every earthly dominion, and we may share largely in the ruin that awaits all earthly kingdoms. But the kingdom of Jesus Christ shall endure forever. Its history may speak of periods of decay, but it never tells of a period of destruction. It will increase in strength, and gather fuller accessions of glory, till it shall be merged in a nobler and higher

dispensation of things. Our safety lies in being linked with this kingdom.

Finally. There is doubtless a period in reserve when a charming humility will go forth over all the doings of men. A time is coming when our men of literature shall all be taught of God. They shall lend a willing heart and delighted ear to the lessons of the Saviour. Then shall men bear some faint resemblance to that high and holy Being who, in the rounds of his benevolence, pauses to shelter the lowliest flower, to break the fall of the sparrow, or enclose its nest securely in the hollow of his hand. When the warmth and colouring of the vernal season glide swiftly over the earth, we feel the change to be grateful, but it is not so grateful as when the breath of the Almighty shall renew the moral aspect of the world. Then shall each revolving day begin, bearing along the tribute of adoring millions. Morning incense shall rise out of every human habitation. The king in his palace shall know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and the peasant shall every evening break the silence of his dwelling with the voice of prayer and the hymn of praise.—If this be fancy, let me die in the sweet delusion. Amen.

DISCOURSE VIII.

The Church a Field for Literary Men.

"For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."—*Matthew*, vi. 32, 33.

Rousseau has written very impressively about the miracles and precepts of Jesus Christ. This exhibition on the part of the Genevan infidel, is an evidence, that the understanding may admire excellence, whilst that excellence is the abhorrence of the heart. He insists particularly, on the infinite ease and authority with which Jesus Christ utters the most weighty truths. This view of our Redeemer is confirmed by the text. How long would it have taken the sages of antiquity, or the moralists of modern days, to have uttered the declaration, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

We consider, 1st. The objects sought by impenitent men.

The objects of pursuit to the impenitent, are various as their propensities. These objects are either subordinate or supreme. Suppose that the accumulation of property be the supreme pursuit—for its enjoyment, when gained, a man must be in possession of health, and if health be impaired, for its re-establishment, he will sacrifice a portion of his property. But the love of wealth shows itself to be unbroken in the heart, so soon as incidental circumstances are removed which disqualify for its enjoyment. Health, then, is a subordinate object of pursuit; but, in the near prospect of death, it may displace other objects, and for a time exercise a total supremacy. Or, if fame be supremely coveted, we must seek after those objects which contribute to our fame; such as literature, taste, eloquence, skilfulness in debate or in war. Whatever may be the department of life, or the department of the mind, in which we wish to be seen of men, we naturally seek after the objects connected with that department. It is well that the ambition of men is various; for were all grasping at the same object, there would be confusion and every evil work. But whilst some are anxious to shine in the senate, others love the still walks of the academy; whilst some delight in the cabinet, others are ambitious to navigate a vessel—the shepherd attends his flock, whilst the statesman watches the movements of the government. How different the ambition of Cæsar,

Hannibal, or Napoleon, from that of Penn, Milton, or West.

In like manner, if power be coveted, there must be subordinate pursuits. Knowledge must be sought, that we may understand how to use power when gained. Popularity must be courted, and the friendship of men assiduously cultivated. We then reduce these objects into a three-fold view, wealth, fame and power; for after all these things do the Gentiles seek.

Wealth is often sought, because its possession involves both power and fame, though it may be sought out of the purest and sheerest love of gain. It is not often, however, that the love of money acquires such an odious ascendency in the heart. There is generally an eye to the comforts which it brings, and to the respectability in life of which it is productive. But the unhallowed avarice of some men, cannot be satisfied with mines of gold, or oceans of jewels, for their avarice deepens with each increase of possession, and there is always a correspondent multiplication of those selfish objects to which their gains are to be applied. It is freely admitted, that the love of money is not likely to be among the reigning temptations of literary men. Still, if not diligently watched, it may come in with other unholy tenants of the heart. Literature may become as busy a speculation as any other pursuit. Men of science and taste are as fully entitled to compensation for their services, as he who prints

their productions. But let not the lawfulness of gain ever tempt to avarice.

The love of fame, is, in some shape or other, universal. We have said before, that in literature, it is a strongly predominating principle, or rather a ruling passion. Ease, health and life, are cheerfully sacrificed to its attainment. It is the source of many mighty movements of genius. Through the love of it, the lyre is often swept with tenfold strength. Behold its influence in the boundless productions of the mind, in the mass of literature, in the manifold creations of genius. Can any one believe that the libraries of Alexandria would have been so well replenished, if authors had foreknown that their writings would be reduced to ashes? or would the writers of Rome been so diligent, had they known that the destructive lava would overwhelm their works?

Power is another of the objects after which the Gentiles seek. The Indian chief may care little for wealth. He is content with his bracelets, his arrows, and his scalping knife. He regards nothing but the resources of his hunting-grounds. But you may read his love of power in his portly gait.

This love of power has a general prevalence. It is an effort on the part of man, to recover the dominion he lost by the fall. The petty despots of Egypt, the lords of feudal times, the captains of all the clans into which earth's population is broken up, show how men would rather reign on earth than serve in heaven. But this desire becomes mo-

dified by circumstances. Some will leave the bodies of those untouched, over whom they wish to acquire influence, and will gain an ascendency over their minds. But it is the love of power still. To seek wealth, fame and power is not criminal, when subordinate to useful and hallowed purposes. Some must have the ascendency. There is an influence that literary men ought to acquire, for if they acquire it not, mankind will go astray more and more. But the supreme love of such things is condemned in the text, the seeking of them for their own sake, and making them the termination of our wishes. To take up the connexion of the text, Jesus Christ did not condemn the Gentiles for seeking after the ordinary supports of life—but seeking them supremely, without a proper recognition of his providence. Christians seek the comforts of life, but they seek first, or supremely, the kingdom of God. Upon such, all the ordinary gifts of providence shall be bestowed, with just as much of wealth, fame, and power as they may need, in the advancement of this kingdom.

We attend, secondly, to the distinctive object of pursuit unfolded in the text.

We are to seek the kingdom of God, by which is meant the church. There are few passages in which it means any thing else. It is sometimes applied to the state of the blest in future felicity, but only so far as the church on earth shadows forth that state. In seeking this kingdom, we are to

seek first, a personal connexion with it. We are not born within its limits.* We are not in alliance with it by natnre. We are directly opposed to it. No two things can possibly be more hostile, than the principles and doctrines of this kingdom, and the heart of a sinner; and who, among the sons of men, can throw from off himself, the charge of being a sinner? The sinner wishes to think in one way, but this kingdom is opposed to all his thoughts; he wishes to act in one way, but this kingdom is opposed to all his actions. My kingdom is not of this world, said the Saviour.

We lay it down as an inevitable duty to be performed by all men, to give themselves up personally to this kingdom. The apostacy of our hearts, or our want of fitness for the peculiar enjoyments of this kingdom, cannot be a plea for withholding such connexion. If invited to holiness, our unholiness cannot excuse us, if we fail to comply with the invitation.

When a connexion with this kingdom is sought, we voluntarily surrender ourselves into the bosom of the church. We adopt its principles, we regulate our lives by its precepts, we submit to its discipline, we cordially accept its consolations, and we contend earnestly for the death, the atonement, and resurrection of its illustrious Founder.

* It must be understood here, that the writer has no allusion to infants, the seed of believers. They are born in the church, and baptism is an acknowledgment, on the part of the church, of their being born within its limits.

2d. We are to seek the peace of this kingdom. It has been planted in a world unfriendly to its repose. It has been attacked with asperity by them that are without, whilst its internal harmony has been often injured by the spirit of discord. Controversy has infested its borders and gone into its interior. The angry passions have been at times displayed by men seemingly contending for the glory of Jesus our exalted king. It is not our object to condemn, or even censure controversy. If they who are infected by scepticism or heresy, be permitted to assail this kingdom with impunity, the consequences would be disastrous. But there is such a thing as the union of decision and meekness, in every kind of warfare. But in Christian warfare, we are bound to give all opposers a triumphant exhibition of our principles. An angry disputant is unlike the Saviour. Let us rather seek after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

When men unceremoniously propound novel sentiments, overthrow established doctrines, treat with levity standards acknowledged for ages, delight, upon partial evidence, in expunging venerated passages from the Scriptures, seek unnecessary discrepancy of opinion with their bretheren, they lay up sharp compunction for their own consciences, put the axe to their own usefulness, and esteem as a feather, all those injunctions of our Saviour which inculcate meekness and gentleness; or when they

regard the discipline of the church as intended for those of an humble intellect, and wholesome in its application to all but themselves—as intended to operate upon the life and not upon new fancies in theology, or upon sentiments and not equally on actions, it may be said of such—Behold how they seek to quarrel with us.

There may be occasions in which it is lawful to break up established ecclesiastical connexions. The reformation is a striking proof, that men ought to sever themselves from a corrupt body. Warmly as the writer is attached to that branch of the church of which he is a minister, he has nevertheless entertained a high veneration for the Erskines of Scotland. But a peaceable retirement, or even a public and spirited condemnation of a corrupt denomination, is better than exciting internal discord. Under all circumstances, whether we go or stay, violence is a fruitless method of advancing the cause of truth. These remarks apply alike to individuals, congregations, or a general view of the denominations, or to the church universal, visible and invisible.

3d. We are to seek the unity of the church. The church is one. There are many members, but one body. The church is, notwithstanding, divided into different denominations, but in them all, more or less, we suppose Jesus Christ to claim a propriety. Any other view, so narrows the mind, that we should doubt the piety of any man, who

would contradict the statement. A vast deal is said about the unity of the church, and by it is frequently meant, throwing mankind under one form of church government, and under a creed expressed in one particular set of words. In other words, our church is the church to the exclusion of other denominations.—The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we. It is trying, to listen to the empty declamation on this subject, which so frequently falls from men, originally destined to nobler purposes; but they have perverted the end of their being. Are such seeking the unity of the church? Are they not a fruitful cause of the divisions of our Zion? We are not even to consult our understandings, but to submit unhesitatingly to the opinions of these spiritual dictators. It is true that we are to be zealous in advancing our peculiar sentiments. It cannot be denied that uniformity in religion is desirable. But though uniformity in religion be desirable, it is not desirable at the expense of the rights of conscience. Not a few have shed blood for the unity of the church. Singular method —the method of base inquisitors, and an unholy priesthood. Dungeons, cells, chains and stakes, what an array for the unity of the church! Analogous to this, is that spirit, which sends away to perdition, every man who cannot see precisely as we see, or repair exactly to the same ecclesiastical cabinet, for the pearl of great price.

But the best way to uphold the unity of the

church is, to make every reasonable allowance for a difference of opinion among men, where that difference does not involve essential principles, to love all that love the Lord Jesus, to subdue the angry feelings, to depend on the power of truth to find its way, to avoid contracted modes of thinking, to believe that in all denominations we may behold the footsteps of the universal flock.

4th. We are to seek the purity of the church. From the days of the apostles to the present, the kingdom of Jesus has been liable to the invasion of impurity. It entered even under the eye of our Saviour. A large portion of the Scriptures is predicated on the belief that corruption may enter, even by slight beginnings. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. We may be laying a broad foundation for impurity, at the time when we suppose that we are doing this kingdom a material service. Constantine desired to be of service to the church, and he threw around it an astonishing outward splendour. But he laid the basis for a superstition as odious, and a tyranny more oppressive, than any that has before or since afflicted the world.

Literary men may be under strong temptations, to regard the church, not as a spiritual body convened by her King, for purposes pure and holy, but as a body, whose views terminate, for the most part, on this world. But this is incorrect; though the church has been at times fostered by kings and nursed by queens. To this no valid objection can

be urged, provided kings and queens become the humble members of that church, subject to its discipline, a discipline flowing from the meek and benignant laws of Jesus Christ.

The purity of the church concerns her doctrines essential to salvation, the humility of her rites, the method of her advancement among those who have never experienced her blessings, the ornamental walk of her members, keeping the Scriptures in their integrity, finding a warrant in the Bible for her officers. The purity of the church has reference also, to the infliction of her censures and penalties on the disobedient, checking the lawless, and accounting as heathen all who decline submission to her honest restraints. Let discipline once slumber in the kingdom of Christ, and her holy altars will soon be profaned by the touch of the irreverent. Then the watchman waketh, but in vain.

5th. The enlargement of the church. To seek the enlargement of the church is to seek the righteousness of the text; because this righteousness is the active obedience which Christ had developed in his sermon on the mount. To suppose that the blessings of grace are communicated to make men idle or graceless, is to suppose that which is supremely absurd.

We are not, however, to approve of every thing which assumes the shape of zeal for the enlargement of the church. The plan of the Roman Emperor cannot be admired by the humble followers of the

Saviour. Those Emperors who persecuted it, did a more essential service to its enlargement. Ignatius Loyola was a man of extensive though exceptionable views. Xavier enlarged the church, but we wish to see no more such enlargements. But many have extended the church on the purest principles.

Men proceed on sure ground when they seek the enlargement of Zion—because God has promised that the church shall fill the world. Prophecies innumerable are directed to the accomplishment of an event so glorious. God has given a pledge of the extensive triumphs of the cross. We may reason from the past to the future. All the prophecies have been fulfilled, when the period came round for their fulfilment. It cannot then be, that He who indited the prophecies can be mistaken with respect to the last days of our earth. Though the world has had an eventful infancy and a tumultuous manhood, God has promised it a long evening of serene and unclouded enjoyment. Away, then, with philosophy, as the hope of man, for who is a rock like unto our God.

Lastly. We are to seek the perpetuity of the church. Its Founder intended it to be durable. The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. It shall endure as long as the sun and the moon.

There have been seasons when the church gave indications of declension and decay, but she has been revived by the presence of her King. Her

members have sometimes retreated to mountains, vales, and dens of the earth. But the Strength of Israel is not a man that he should lie, or the son of man, that he should repent. He has gone on conquering and to conquer; subduing individual after individual, and nation after nation. When the enemies of this kingdom have set themselves to sing its death song, this same kingdom has risen up with signs of unusual animation. The perpetuity of this kingdom is secured by the decree of Him, who said, This day have I begotten thee; but means and the end are connected in its government.

All the members of this kingdom are to use their utmost exertions to give perpetuity to the design of its Founder. It is noble to employ wealth, in establishing schools and colleges; in founding lectureships for the elucidations of particular branches of truth; to translate the Scriptures into different languages, or to circulate important publications. Theological Seminaries are one of the most likely means of giving strength to the church. The Old Testament informs us of the existence of such institutions under that economy which it reveals; and we who live under a brighter dispensation, should not be reproved by the zeal of ages forever elapsed. If the ministers of the gospel be not deeply imbued with the unction of sacred literature, the church must decline. But a new impulse has been given to Theological learning, and its influence has been

propitious on the state of the world. The motives to the prosecution of the work have been numerous. In proportion to the increase of piety among ministers, we may calculate upon a larger measure of diligence; and in proportion to the increase of consecrated literature, we may anticipate an increase of usefulness.

These things and more are implied in seeking first or supremely the kingdom of Jesus Christ. We inquire then into the method of seeking this kingdom. This may be done by our example, by prayer, diligence, by curtailing superfluous expenditures, by cheerfully making sacrifices by the proper employment of our wealth.

But we inquire particularly how literary men may seek the good of this kingdom.

1. Literary men in their publications may serve the church. There is here a wide scope for the exercise of talent. To defend the principles of revealed truth is the incumbent duty of all to whom the Head of the church has committed talents adequate to the task. If either indolence, or a too sensitive diffidence should debar men from the performance of duty, they must anticipate a dread responsibility. If many, influenced by mere human motives, acquire literature with almost resistless ease, what should not their attainments be, who desire to hold them all as sacred to the good of the church. If the press every day be groaning beneath the weight of publications, the direct or

remote tendency of which is to overthrow Christianity, how strong should be the tide of a counteracting literature.

The church has had serious conflicts to maintain. One of these contests has been on the inspiration of the Scriptures; another on the proper method of their interpretation. A profound conflict is yet to be maintained on the subject of missions. We have no room to doubt that victory will be in favour of the church. We have able writers who have appeared to plead the cause of the heathen. They have laboriously elucidated truth, stated facts, corrected misrepresentations. Whilst others have thrown a deceitful colouring on the moral condition of the heathen, they have unfolded that condition in its awful character. They have displayed the suitableness of Christianity to all countries, and have traced with a masterly hand the blessings which accompany its reception.

But literature has not only been useful in defending, but also in illustrating and applying the truths of Christianity. Its illustrations have been numerous and happy. The book of travels, the volume of essays, the sketch of the imagination, the elegant and fascinating poem, or publications on a larger scale, may all be useful when directed aright. Piety has often mingled itself with the meditations of the scholar, and prayer has often preceded the great undertakings of science.

2dly. By translations of the Scriptures. The

office of translation is a most delicate office. In transferring the thoughts of a writer from one language to another, we owe the writer a personal obligation. But the translation of classical authors sinks into insignificance when we take up the record of eternal life. This delicate task, however, has in many instances been nobly performed. The great mass of mankind can do nothing more than read the Scriptures in that language to which they have always been accustomed, and with literary men must ever be lodged the exalted privilege of giving out the Holy Scriptures to the world. The nations are compelled to receive them upon the representation of those skilled in the original tongues, so that in every view this task should not be committed to weak and insufficient men.

There is no service which can be rendered more important than the translation of the Scriptures. In what other way can the world be evangelized? We need not expect a miracle by which the various languages of the earth will be reduced into one speech. We should therefore admire the watchful providence of God, in raising up from age to age, men qualified for so responsible an undertaking. The history of the church will show from time immemorial, men intent on the great work of translation, who have sustained great privations, who have debarred themselves from polished society, who have wrought night and day in this mine of exhaustless wealth. Happy men!

though the world may have looked contemptuously on their humble labours, they understood the true ends of literature. They felt that they were providing for nations the germ of a moral resurrection.

3d. Commentaries. If the translation of the mind of the Spirit be a delicate duty, that of interpreting this mind is scarcely less delicate. The object of the commentator, is to unfold, elucidate, to explain, to reconcile, and to apply. He must have an impartial mind, a clear discernment, and a spirit unsubdued by difficulties. He should be abundantly skilled in all languages necessary to the consummation of his design. He should be accurately acquainted with history, and indeed with all the circle of literature. He should have a taste for the Scriptures in preference to all other books, and intrepidity faithfully to expound and diligently to apply the sacred record. Many commentaries have been written. Scholars have sought for the meaning of the Scriptures; and though there may be occasionally a contrariety of views, that contrariety but seldom affects the truths essential to salvation.

4thly. There is a mass of literature which may be traced to the Scriptures as its source. In all this, literary men have rendered important services to Christianity. The commentaries which have been written, the numerous translations, versions of single books of the Scriptures, have flowed from this

fountain. The evidences of revealed truth have been developed in various publications. Innumerable volumes of sermons have been written, urging the doctrines and precepts of Christianity. Essays have derived their principles from the Scriptures. Works of science have owed to them much of their value. History has taken from them some of its best materials. In all this there is reverence expressed for the Holy Scriptures, and a sanctity fixed upon them, which delights the heart of him who habitually reads them as the law of the Most High. But by many literary men, it seems to be taken for granted that the Christian portion of the community are without any feeling of that which is sublime or beautiful in the mind, and Christians are effectually shut out from a perusal of their works, by the levity or impiety with which they treat every thing connected with the Holy Scriptures.

5thly. Literary men may seek the good of the church by the diffusion of knowledge. The church is a kingdom of moral and mental light. Information is necessary to its very existence. The church cannot be planted among a barbarous and unenlightened people, without accomplishing a transformation. This might be proved from past history and present observation. The church has been charged with keeping the human mind in darkness, and the human will in bondage. Ra-

ther, has not the emancipation of the human mind been wrought by her influence?

Who shall tell the evils of popular ignorance? an ignorance profound about subjects the most momentous. To a corrupt heart and unenlightened mind may not every enormous vice be traced? Our men of literature have it in their power to do much in checking the evils of popular ignorance. Let them lay some plan, by the operation of which mankind may be induced to read extensively, and let the voice of the ministry be lifted up, to warn the people of the dangers of ignorance.

6thly. With literary men must principally lie the invention of new schemes for doing good. We say principally, because some schemes owe their origin to men of moderate attainments, rather than to men of superior literary accomplishments. But to do good on a large scale must demand some considerable portion of intelligence. A jealousy has been expressed about novel schemes for the operation of good. But this jealousy has no foundation. It would go to overturn many of the wise and salutary plans of the present day, for the extension of the church. Who does not see that it would sap the basis of our Bible societies? for none can deny that the novelty of this scheme astonished the world. Missionary societies, Sabbath schools, and the ever varying forms of doing good must be exterminated, if we were to regard the ever fitful jealousy of some, whose scruples ought not to be treated with severity, but they certainly deserve

no great share of our tenderness. Who would have wished to put a stop to the labours of Howard because they were novel? It was indeed a novelty to see a man, blessed with competency, entering upon such a course of self-denial, sacrificing property, ease, literature, to those who lived in the cells of pestilential prisons.

The labours of Chalmers have something like novelty to recommend them, because his genius is fruitful as his piety is profound. But we cannot censure him for his laudable attempts to point out what is erroneous in systems of benevolence, or to apply Christianity to sceptical astronomers and thrifty merchants.

So long as the world is estranged from God, so long will invention be needed in trying to effect its return to its Maker. Not that ancient plans are to be overlooked or lightly esteemed, but let new schemes be brought to the aid of those, which after a long trial, have been but partially efficacious.

7thly. Literary men may appropriate their influence to the service of the church. A portion of influence must be consequent upon devotedness to letters, and this influence may be used either properly or improperly. An ascendency in society may either minister to pride, the natural love of superiority, rivalship, and every unholy passion; or it may be used to improve the moral condition of men. With literary men lies the formation of the public mind, and the education of the rising

race. But the public mind is frequently polluted from sources that ought to promote its sanctity, and death is communicated whence life only should issue. Yet it is much more honourable to receive the gratitude of the church, and the plaudits of mankind, for an influence put forth to the utmost extent for the good of our species.

8thly. A part of the wealth of literary men should be consecrated to the enlargement of the church. Literary men have seldom been rich in this world. An exception to this remark is not furnished by the present state of literature. There may possibly be some who have grown opulent by the labours of the pen, but they are comparatively few. Yet there are instances which are highly gratifying, of men devoting a large portion of that which comes to them from intellectual exertions to pious and benevolent purposes. Many who fastidiously condemn the meditations of Hervey, would do well to imitate his disinterestedness, for he devoted all the proceeds of that work to the relief of human misery. This was an offering of the mind to Him who endowed it, and therefore an offering peculiarly acceptable.

We propose, in the 4th place, briefly to consider the promise annexed,—All these things shall be added to those who diligently and supremely seek the good of the church.

A belief seems generally to prevail, that a supreme devotedness to the church must necessarily

involve us in poverty. But such devotedness was never attended by such consequences. Poverty may often come in the train of that selfishness which inclines us to live only for the advancement of our own schemes, but it never was the consequence of an enlightened attention to those distinctive truths which are taught in the kingdom of Jesus. He who employs his mind for the good of the church, urged on by the constraining motives of the gospel, shall never want. We promise him not opulence, splendour, or worldly glory, after which the Gentiles seek—but we promise him exemption from want. Were it necessary, the age of miracles would be revived, sooner than that they should need any thing, who are always giving the glory of their attainments to this kingdom of light. Let literary men try this expedient, and they shall never want.

In reviewing this discourse, we remark, that fame, wealth and power, are but transient attainments. They are not worthy the search of an immortal creature. They quickly vanish, they are consumed every instant in the devouring flight of time. The poet of Down Hall has sung their emptiness. The most delicately woven minds have discovered their deceitfulness, and told upon it to the generations to come. But the church shall endure. In her horizon alone can we clearly descry honour, glory, and immortality.

But it is time to bring these discourses to a close,

which have been humbly directed to the Divine glory. The writer has frequently implored upon them the Divine blessing, convinced, that without that blessing, all will be in vain. He is not ashamed to confess, before the kings and princes of our literature, that he sees a charm in the Scriptures, infinitely superior to any charm of science. Still there is a solid value in literature, and most devoutly is it to be desired, that all engaged in its pursuits, might discover those obligations which bind them to the eternal Source of wisdom.

The writer will cheerfully give all the glory to God, should these discourses be in any way useful to literary men. Should they be condemned, the condemnation might wound, but we cannot forget that there is balm in Gilead, and a Divine Physician there.

If asked, why he should lift up his voice, from a distant hamlet to warn literary men, when so many aged ministers fill our churches and adorn our pulpits? It is answered, that our venerable fathers have long done this, and these discourses are but the feeble echo of their voice. It is one of another generation, attempting an humble confirmation of their principles. Amen.

APPENDIX.

The writer of these Discourses avails himself of the privilege of an Appendix, to say a few things which he considers necessary, that his design may be understood by the reader. The Discourses are not offered as a full discussion of the important subject to which they relate. No one could feel a deeper conviction than he feels, that the connexion of Christianity and Literature is capable of a much wider discussion, than the discussion here attempted. But the attempt may possibly be instrumental in drawing the attention of some, who are vastly better qualified than the author of these Discourses, to throw light on such a subject. With this view, and by the solicitation of some of his esteemed brethren in the ministry, the writer has concluded to commit to the press, a work, which, to some good degree at least, must depend for its success, on the indulgence of the public.

It is well known, that the relation of Literature to Christianity is attracting, at present, a considerable share of attention. In evidence of this, we would direct the attention of the reader, to an Es-

say, by Foster, on the Distaste of Literary Men to Evangelical Religion—to a Sermon, entitled the Union of Piety and Science, by my learned and venerable friend, Dr. Ashbel Green, to the Literary Fountains Healed, a Sermon, by Dr. S. Miller—to several well written pieces in the Christian Spectator, and to a number of able Reviews in the Christian Observer, and in the Investigator. The two last mentioned works are published in London.

It is proper to remark, that these Discourses were never delivered from the pulpit. They could not have been delivered with propriety, unless in a course of academical preaching. The reason why they have been thrown into the form of Sermons, rather than of Essays is, that the writer, being more accustomed to the composition of Sermons, supposed that he might thereby do more justice to the subject.

The eulogium on Dr. Watts, will be thought by many too unqualified, and the remarks on Dr. Franklin, will be thought too severe. But the writer will abide both by the one and the other, after remarking, that some of Watts's hymns might be corrected to advantage, and that Dr. Franklin, intellectually considered, was among the greatest of men.

In the remarks on the Scotch novels, the allusion is not to all the productions of the author of those works, but to a few of the most celebrated.

In speaking of Periodical Literature, it might be

supposed, without an explanatory remark, that a reflection was intended on the periodical works of our country. But the writer is only speaking of the necessity of concentrating, on some of them, an ample pecuniary support, and he would plead for their multiplication in proportion to the ability with which they are supported.

With these remarks the writer has committed the Discourses to the press, humbly hoping that they may be candidly read, especially by probationers for the holy ministry; but desiring, above all things, that the Divine blessing may rest on this feeble attempt to serve the cause of truth.

FINIS.

Date Due

Library Bureau Cat. no. 1137

literature

15361

TO